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PRINCESS PUCK.

CHAPTER XIX.

BELLA was not proud, neither was she exacting in any particular; but there are times when even the least proud is tried by his family. Bella was so tried on the day that she went with Polly and Bill to Bymouth.

Bymouth was the place selected by the three for the change which Polly said they needed after all their trouble. They could not afford a change, it is true; but, as Polly also said: "It is no good waiting till you can afford a thing; by that time you will probably not want it." Bella agreed with Polly; Bill's cautious vote on the opposite side was overruled, and to Bymouth they went. Bymouth, being four miles from a railway-station, had the merit of being a cheap place; a railway-line was indeed on its way there, but had not yet got very far. Visitors who wished to go to Bymouth drove from Bybridge, or walked, sending their luggage by the carrier's cart. The cousins walked, and as the carrier charged threepence for each package Polly said, "We must not take too much."

Bella agreed: it was easy to agree, for they had not much to take, and they were only going for a week; but Polly's notion of luggage and Bella's were not identical. This was the first of Bella's trials; the matter of provisions was another question

which needed settlement. Polly said they had better take all they could with them, for Bymouth (she had never been there) was a very out-of-the-way place where everything would be difficult to get; also (she added as an afterthought) what they took with them they would have free, while what they bought there they would have to pay for. Bella did not see the necessity of provisioning themselves as if they were going to a desert-island; however, she gave way to a certain extent, and Polly put a cold fowl in her hat-box (Bella would not have it in hers), three large lettuces rolled up in Bill's bathing-dress, and a neat packet of fat ham in slices securely wedged among the same obliging cousin's underwear.

"You can take the tea," Polly said, handing Bella a large paper bag.

Bella took it in so pleasant a manner that Polly was induced to try her with some plum turnovers which she was anxious not to leave behind, because she said, "they would be so nice to eat in the train."

"You can't eat things in the train," Bella exclaimed scandalised, "least of all plum turnovers. Besides, do you think I am going to open my luggage in the train to get them out? Why, it will be in the van!"

"So it will," Polly agreed; "I forgot that. Still, they will be nice

to eat when we get there; we shall be hungry then, for we must dine very early to leave in time."

But Bella was obdurate; she would not take the turnovers, which she was sure would not be wanted.

"Oh, well, please yourself," Polly said good-humouredly, and packed them in the crown of Bill's hat. "She will have to wear her best one," she said; "this is much easier to pack." And she crammed in hat and turnovers together.

Bella, not seeing what she was doing, raised no objections, but on the subject of apples she was firm. There were a certain number of wind-fall apples Polly wanted to bring, because, she said, fruit was always dear at the sea-side; but she could not get them in among her things or Bill's, and Bella absolutely declined to have them. Polly was annoyed, but at last gave it up, leaving the apples scattered over the dressing-table, while she turned her attention to strapping up waterproofs. Bill had begun to do this, putting in with them an extra petticoat; Polly added the subscription of a dressing-jacket, but she was called down-stairs just then and Bella took the straps from Bill and persuaded her to give up the idea of taking the additions. "You don't want them," she said, "and we can't go about looking as if we were bringing home the family washing in a mackintosh."

"Why does Bella want to look so respectable?" Bill asked Polly, when they were alone later on.

"Because," Polly answered severely, "she is a lady."

Bill, not at all impressed, smiled her derision, and proceeded: "Why was she so cross when she found out too late that my best boots were packed?"

"Because Jack Dawson will be at the station. Just as if"—Polly was

contemptuous—"he would look at your boots! It is market-day so he is going to Wrugglesby; he is going to drive Bella—you and I and the luggage will go in the chaise with Sam."

"I see," said Bill, and began to make various odds and ends, refused accommodation elsewhere, into a parcel. She had no idea of annoying Bella, but she had two different pieces of brown paper, both too small, and no genius for making parcels.

Polly glanced round to see if there was anything forgotten; her eye fell on the apples. "It does seem a pity to leave them," she sighed. Then an idea occurred to her and her face brightened. "I know what I will do," she said.

She turned to an open drawer and stirred it over till she found a small calico bag. She had many such,—Bill called them nosebags—which she used to hold all manner of odds and ends collected from various people. The one she brought out now contained scraps of ribbon, the accumulation of many years. She emptied it, finding a home for most of its contents in a smaller bag already used to hold some fifteen pieces of pencil. Then she put the best of the apples into the empty bag and forced it some way up the centre of Bella's neat roll of waterproofs. "It is a pity to unfasten them," she said; "they are so nicely done up. I am sure the bag won't fall out, and it hardly shows at all."

That may have been, but the first thing Bella saw when she came on the platform at Wrugglesby was the bag, mouth-end foremost, sticking out of the roll which Bill held under her arm.

"Are they here?" Jack asked as he came out of the booking-office with her ticket. They were here, very much here; poor Bella almost wished they were not.

"I don't see them," Jack went on, looking down the crowded platform; the train stopped everywhere and was always full. "Oh yes," he said at last, "there's Miss Hains, but I don't see the luggage."

Bella could hardly see anything else, she was so painfully conscious of it all: Polly's round tin hat-box, packed to bursting, with the white string of some garment shut in the hinge; the little hair-trunk with a broken handle (the property of the late Mr. Hains), Bill's paper parcel resting on the top; Bill herself, with her old boots very much in evidence, standing beside.

Polly caught sight of Bella and smiled pleasantly as they approached; Jack took charge of the luggage and the train came in.

"Jump in, and I'll hand the things to you," he said. "Are you going to have this in the carriage?" and he lifted the tin hat-box which would neither go under a seat nor in a rack.

"Yes, yes, please!" Polly cried, and took it from him.

He picked up Bill's parcel; the two ends drooped in a dangerous manner, but he handed it to its owner without mishap, while Polly tried to force the unwieldy hat-box under a seat. It would not be forced, and after disturbing efforts Polly left it among the legs of the other passengers, straightening herself just in time to see Bill drop her parcel in Bella's lap and take the roll which Jack handed to her, the bag of apples falling out with a thud as he did so.

"Hullo!" said Jack; "what have I dropped?"

Bella grew scarlet, and prayed that the bag might have fallen down on the line. No such thing,—it lay on the platform, one of the apples shaken out by the fall beside it. Jack picked it up and gave it to Bill. "Here you are, Miss Bill," he said;

"wait a moment, here's another one, —you nearly lost your refreshment that time."

Fortunately the train started almost immediately and so prevented Bill from explaining that the apples were Polly's and not hers. Bella leaned back in the carriage overcome with shame, while Bill serenely restored the apple to the bag, and then tried in vain to get it back into its original hiding-place. "It won't go," she said at last; "we shall either have to undo the straps or carry it separately: which would you rather, Bella?"

"I don't care; it does not matter." Bella felt that to be asked which she preferred now was adding insult to injury.

"Let us undo the straps," Polly said; "then we can put your parcel in too; it does not look very strong."

Bill unfastened the straps, and finding the parcel too broad to go inside comfortably, she unfastened that too and rearranged its miscellaneous contents. Then she packed it and the apples into a water-proof; one of the apples rolled on to the floor and was pounced upon by a small fellow-traveller.

"Mustn't, mustn't," the mother said; "it belongs to the ladies; give it to the ladies."

But the ladies, as represented by Polly, were benign and made a present of the apple, afterwards entering into conversation with the mother on the subject of the age and habits of the child. Bella took no part, and Bill applied herself to the refastening of the straps. When that was done she listened to what was being said, for the talk by this time had worked round to Bymouth, which, it seemed, the mother knew well.

Now Bymouth had been Bill's own choice; she did not know much about it, nor did the others, except that the

journey there was a cheap one and that, after all, was an important piece of knowledge. The thing, however, which attracted Bill was the fact that the recognised heir to Wood Hall had been spoken of in her presence as Harborough of Bybridge. She did not exactly expect to come across him while passing through the small town on her way to Bymouth, but she had a vague idea that she might see him, and she was anxious to know what he was like. Yet another reason for her interest in the place was that her history of the county had told her that it was the home of the Corby family, they who had also owned the small manor of Corbycroft whence the old Squire's body had been carried to the chapel at Wood Hall. Somewhere between Bybridge and Sandover, a place somewhat higher up the coast than Bymouth, had been their ancestral home. It had been pulled down long ago, and the family had died out, probably in great poverty from the story of the old Squire's body being in danger of arrest for debt. But in their day the Corbys had been rich: all the ground on which the now fashionable watering-place of Sandover stood had been theirs; and though as agricultural land it had not been worth much, its annual rental now was more than enough to reinstate the family fortunes twice over.

Bill asked many questions of their talkative travelling-companion when she found that, besides being born at Bymouth, she had lived since her marriage at Sandover. However, she could tell little of what Bill wanted to know; she could speak of the extravagant price of lodgings at Sandover, the beauty of the pier, the number of the grocers' shops,—her husband owned one, the very best in the town. There were tombs, she said, lots of old tombs in St. Clement's

churchyard; people often came to see them. "Old gentlemen come with spades and things," she went on, becoming somewhat mixed in her ideas, "and poke about and read inscriptions and find no end—why, the cliffs are full of queer things, fossils as big as your hand and little tiny shells. Sandover is a very interesting place."

"I dare say," Polly said with vacant affability; "we must try to go there one day."

She had not the least intention of going, but Bill, who did not say so, had, and she brought their loquacious informant back to St. Clement's and the tombs. After some time she learned that the interesting churchyard was situated on the outskirts of Sandover, on the landward side. The particular attraction of the tombs she could not learn, her informant having only been there once: "When my Joey was nine months old, and it was a hot day too, I carried him all the way; my sister, she did offer to help me but—"

Here she addressed herself to Polly, who sympathised on the subject of heat and the weight of nine months' old babies until the tombs seemed forgotten. But Bill, patient and persistent, was at last rewarded by hearing that the charm of one lay in the fact that it commemorated a man who shot himself nearly a hundred years ago.

"They say," continued Joey's mother, taking the core of the apple from the disappointed Joey, to the great relief of a maiden lady in a light gown, "they do say he didn't ought to 've been buried there at all, for they were very particular in those days about burying suicides at the cross-roads. However, some thought he hadn't really shot himself, but that his friend, who he'd been gambling with, murdered him or something. They didn't rightly know, so they

put him in the churchyard on the chance, as the nearest cross-roads had already been took up for a farmer who cut his throat with a sickle."

Bill, who had handled one, wondered how he did it, but contented herself with asking the name of the other suicide.

"I can't call to my mind," was the answer she received, "but he was one of the gentlefolks. I've heard my good man say he was squire, but of course it was long before his time; there's none of the name about now; but my husband, he's a great one for finding out things, he's—"

And there followed a detailed account of his peculiarities and accomplishments, at the conclusion of which Bill suggested that the forgotten name might be Corby.

"That's it!" the voluble lady exclaimed with delight. "Fancy you remembering it and me not! I have got a head! Corby, that's it—or is it Harborough? There are both there, but I think it's Corby; they were the great people hereabouts; my man says they used to own all the land, but they are dead and gone now, every one of them."

"Who owns the land now?" asked Bill.

"A Mr. Briant, a rich man living in London; he comes to Bymouth for shooting, but he don't trouble Sandover much. He's made a good thing of it, a fine man of business he's called, though I should call him precious close myself."

A list of Mr. Briant's delinquencies followed, with an account of the way in which he was bringing other seaside places into fashion, a form of speculation to which he seemed addicted. Bill did not listen very much, her thoughts turning to the long dead Corbys and Harboroughs. She thought of them a good deal both then and later, determining to pay

their graves a visit at the first opportunity.

CHAPTER XX.

BILL did not put this determination into practice at once, for she forgot all about it during the first two days at Bymouth. The cousins arrived there on a Thursday evening; Friday and Saturday were two golden, never-to-be-forgotten days to Bill, in which she cannot be said to have thought of anyone or anything. She did precisely what she pleased, and undid, according to Polly, all the little good she had gained during the past months. "She is five years younger and ten times worse than she ever was," said that remorseless critic, and debated how best she could speak to the offender about Gilchrist and her behaviour to him. Bill did not trouble herself much about Gilchrist at this time: Polly told her that she ought to write to him every day as Bella did to Jack, but this she entirely declined to do, and only under great pressure could she be induced to write every other day, considering even that a great waste of time and stamps as she had nothing to say to him.

While Polly was still pondering on the subject of Gilchrist Harborough, Bill's thoughts returned to the other and older members of the family. On Sunday she recalled her intention of visiting their graves, and went to St. Clement's, Sandover, for the afternoon service. She walked in the heat of the day (thereby losing her dinner), reached the church in time for the *Magnificat*, and heard the dreariest music and the most unedifying sermon in the world. But it did not matter; she was seventeen, sound in wind and limb, body and soul, and consequently quite unconscious of herself mentally, morally, and physically. The womanhood, which had timidly

tried to assert itself during the early summer, had slipped away; the thoughts and cares, the hopes and fancies which had begun to grow in the past months were lulled to sleep now by the sea and the sunshine, playmates which had called her irresistibly during these last days. She was a child still though she was not conscious of it; afterwards, in looking back, she knew those three perfect days were the last of her childhood.

When the service was over she went out into the churchyard to examine the gravestones, which did not prove so numerous or so interesting as she had expected. A fair proportion of the older ones were in memory of the Corbys, who also, as she had seen during the service, had two tablets within the church inscribed to them. One she could not read; the other was to the honour and glory of a lady named Jane, wife of one Richard Corby, and evidently the pattern and model of what a wife should be; she possessed so many virtues that Bill felt, when she saw how young she had died, that, though sad, it was but natural.

"She must have been the mother of the granddaughter who managed the old Squire's burial," she thought as she craned her neck to see the date. "I expect Jane would have objected to that business. I wonder what became of the granddaughter; perhaps she is buried outside."

But she was not; there were no more recent tombs to the family outside. Jane's husband had died and been buried abroad some years after his wife, the event being announced briefly at the foot of the encomium of that lady's virtues. The old Squire, who must have died later still, was not buried in this part of the country; the few graves in St. Clement's churchyard which bore the Corby name were all of older date, the inscriptions of

some half effaced, none in their briefness telling a story, romantic or tragic, of that forgotten past. The stone slab in memory of the suicide was hardly an exception to this rule, and the man whose brief record it bore was not a Corby at all. *Peter Harborough, died at Corby Dean in this parish. March 12th, 1799. Shot.* That was all; of the history of his life and the tragedy of his death there had been found nothing to say but the one word, *shot*. To Bill it seemed almost terrible in its uncompromising briefness. As she stood looking at the stone, a brown-winged butterfly rested for a moment on the moss-grown lettering. "Who did it?" She asked herself. "Who and why?" But there was no answer; she did not know who, nor yet why some unknown hand had left this single record of the tragedy.

She turned away at last, and unfolding the cheap little map of the district she had borrowed to help her on the way to St. Clement's, she spread it on a flat tomb-stone and searched for Corby Dean. It used to be the seat of the Corby family, she knew; now that the house was pulled down the name seemed to have passed to a small farm and a handful of cottages built, apparently, on the spot where the house once stood.

"Corby Dean meant the house where Peter Harborough was shot," Bill said with her finger on the map. "He was with the Corbys then. What happened? What were they doing?"

She clasped her hands round her knee and gave herself up to dreams. All round her was the peace of earliest September, rich in its haze of tender warmth, summer still save for the opalescence of its lights, the coolness of its lengthening shadows. But Bill did not see it; she was building in her mind a history of the past, recon-

structing the life which had been, groping in her memory, feeling that there, if she could but find it, was a picture of this old tragedy; a tale, nay, more than a tale, an actual experience if she could but recall it. A robin chirped shrilly in the churchyard yew; she started at the sound and the half-awakened memory was gone from her, the ghosts crept back to their graves, the past was merged in shadows again. Here was nothing but the stillness of Sunday afternoon, the peace of the earth's sabbaths of September. Such golden restful days had been before these men lived, and still were though they were gone.

She rose, and folding her map, went out of the churchyard shutting the gate behind her. Dead; that generation was dead, gone, forgotten, that generation—and the next! That too was lost in mist—and the next! The Corbys were ended, exhausted, but the Harboroughs! This brought her to the present day and to Harborough of Bybridge. She remembered that as yet she had heard nothing of him, and so remembering, she determined if possible to find out what manner of man he was—a determination she need hardly have troubled to make, for the next day, without effort on her own part, she knew.

Monday did not seem a propitious day for discoveries; the weather was unsettled in the morning and the afternoon was one of ceaseless rain. Polly, seeing the state of affairs, prepared to spend three pleasant hours over her wardrobe; she pulled the table to the window, brought out her Sunday hat, took off the trimming, and proceeded to rearrange it with the bows behind instead of before. Bella retired to the bedroom (they only had one between the three) to write a letter, and Bill found a delightful occupation down-stairs. Their rooms were over the village shop

which was also the post-office for a wide district. The rain seemed to make very little difference to the business done there; in fact it appeared to rather increase the number of customers, those who were not obliged to come finding some excuse to spend ten minutes or so in this cheerful little centre of gossip.

Mrs. Rose, the landlady and post-mistress, was short-handed just at present, her assistant having gone home to nurse a sick mother. The girl who helped with the house-work came in to lend a hand, but she was not clever, and the drawing-room lodgers had an elaborate tea at five o'clock which seemed to require much preparation in the afternoon. Thus it was without much trouble that Bill persuaded Mrs. Rose to let her help in the shop that day. The permission once given she set to work with great satisfaction, and soon found out something of the whereabouts of the articles most in demand. The stock was a very miscellaneous one, ranging from boots and twine through strange specimens of crockery and many-coloured cottons to Gregory's Powder and treacle. Occasionally it took some little while to find the thing required, but the customers were in no hurry; indeed, most of them seemed more inclined to talk than to buy, Mrs. Rose seconding them when she was not despatching a telegram or otherwise conducting State-affairs through the medium of her post-office. Bill talked a good deal and listened even more; her parcels, it is to be feared, were not of the neatest, but her conversation was admirable and the customers seemed satisfied.

These customers were a representative lot. Some were visitors who found the afternoon tedious and came to while away the time by buying sweetmeats or papers or strange little penny dolls, according to their age

and tastes; some were neighbours from near by come for a pound of marmalade and a gossip; others were from the next village, genuine customers really anxious to transact business. The landlady from the house next door came once, being in trouble because her lodgers would have curry that night, and "she without a mite of curry-powder in the house." A man from the coastguard station came asking for a species of tobacco that Bill took ten minutes to find, during which time he gave limitless information about the prospects of the weather. One of the customers was an anxious mother who wanted to buy castor-oil, but Bill, discovering that there was none, induced her to have Gregory's Powder instead. "It will do just as well if he is five years old," she said putting up a small dose. "Now, my dear, what for you?" This was said to a little girl with eyes just level with the top of the high counter.

"Treacle, half cup," was the answer, and the cup, with the coppers wrapped in paper reposing inside it, was handed up.

Bill turned to the green barrel-shaped tin canister with the label *golden syrup* and the spigot-tap she had been itching to turn all the afternoon. As the purchaser of Gregory's Powder left the shop, another customer came in, a young fellow in splashed gaiters and streaming mackintosh. Bill did not notice him much, being engaged in a struggle with the tap grown stiff by reason of age and treacle. He held a paper in his hand, perhaps a telegram, but he waited patiently enough while an animated conversation went on between Mrs. Rose and an elderly lady whom she had just served. The tap moved a little, and the treacle began to run, slowly, it must be admitted, but still it ran, in the course of time doubtless the cup would

be half filled. Bill glanced at the last comer; "a member of the surrounding aristocracy" she thought, noticing an indefinable something about his clothes and bearing and clear-cut profile. When he turned the accuracy of the profile was lost, but the eyes, very grave young eyes, met hers and—

Her heart began to beat very fast, though she could not in the least tell why. She ought to have lowered her eyes but she did not; they were fixed; she could not look away, and he did not look away either. She could hear the beating of her heart plainly, almost as if some giant hand were clutching it. She was afraid, she knew not of what, afraid to look, afraid to look away, most terribly afraid of herself, ashamed, yet foolishly, triumphantly glad. Her hands grew very cold and moist, her breath came short, she lost consciousness of what was going on around her; the little dim shop vanished, the pile of boots and pans and seaside pails, the child who peered at her over the counter, the women who talked by the desk. They two were alone, he and she, alone in all the world.

"Cup's runnin' over."

Bill started like one waking from a deep sleep; the dark, greenish fluid was slowly running over the sides of the cup. She forced the tap back; her hands seemed so weak it was difficult to move it, and they trembled till she could hardly hold the cup. She gave it to the child,—one cannot put surplus treacle back into a tightly closed canister—she gave it, full as it was, and the child took it, carefully licking the edges to prevent any running to waste, and walked sedately out of the shop. Bill sat down on a little high stool behind the counter; her face was very pale and she was shaking all over. Mrs. Rose, who had disposed of her last customer, saw her. "Why, Missie,"

she said, "you're tired out. I oughtn't of kep' you here all this blessed afternoon."

"I am not tired, thank you," Bill protested mechanically.

But Mrs. Rose was unconvinced. "That I'm sure you are; I never saw such a lot of folks as we had this afternoon, a gossipin' lot too. As for that Mrs. Randal, I thought she'd never go, taking up the room like that! I'm sure that gentleman was going to send a telegram and he never did; he walked out of the shop without sayin' a word, a loss of sixpence to the Government."

"Who is he, do you know?" Bill's voice sounded curiously stifled in her own ears; she looked down as she spoke, but she could feel the colour rising to her forehead.

"Who? Why, young Mr. Harborough of Bybridge."

CHAPTER XXI.

KIT HARBOROUGH paced the lane restlessly. The rain had ceased but he still wore his long mackintosh, and in one pocket the unsent telegram was crushed forgotten. For a moment he stood, then walked his five yard beat of wet road again. A church-bell sounded on the moist air,—curfew, they still tolled curfew at Bymouth; it was eight o'clock and nearly dark in the deep lane. On either hand rose high banks luxuriant with unclipped nuts and dogwood and sharp-thorned sloes, the late rain still dripping from every spray; the pleasant scent of wet ferns filled the air, the pungent flavour of the fungus on some tree-stump in the hedge mingling with the smell of the drenched grass growing tall and rank beside the road. The fragrance of the refreshed earth reached Kit but he hardly knew it, hardly heard the creak of the hidden grasshoppers in

the moist darkness of the banks, hardly saw the wild flowers glimmering in the roadside grass.

He leaned against a gate and looked across the darkening land, across the stubble-field whence the corn had been carried, over the slope of the hill to the village in the hollow, a huddle of roofs in the gathering gloom, the chimneys sharp against the sky and the smoke-wreaths hanging low in the wet air. Lights were beginning to twinkle here and there, one in the house at the corner, the little shop where he had seen her.

He settled himself against the gate-post and watched. He was two-and-twenty and had never looked consciously at a woman before. Two and twenty, and now he had found, among the mouse-traps and string-balls and miscellaneous gear of a village-shop, a little brown witch with the spell of a dead man's charm in her eyes, the passion of a dead woman's love in her blood!

A partridge rose suddenly on the further side of the stubble-field; there was a whirr of wings, and then silence again and the soft drip of the wet trees. Then he heard a swift, light footfall, and saw a little figure speeding up the lane, perhaps to reach the high ground near the gate whence to look at the surrounding country in the beauty of this tearful twilight.

Kit Harborough stepped out of the shadow by the gate to the centre of the road: the girl stopped abruptly with a little cry.

"I knew you would come," he said.

He did not know how he knew, or if he really knew; he did not stop to consider and she did not ask him.

"You!" was all she said, "You!"

"Yes," he answered.

"Oh," and it seemed almost as if she were distressed. "I—I wanted to speak to you; I have something I must tell you."

"Me? I am very glad."

He was astonished at himself, being a curiously diffident lad in some respects; so inexperienced, too, that had he stopped to think he would never have known what to say. But he did not think, he spoke on impulse, and the words came natural enough; his only fear was lest she should escape and he should lose her in the gloom, but even that was not a real fear; he felt as if he could prevent her.

She was standing in the middle of the road now. "You are glad?" she said. "That is because you do not know."

She looked up at him as she spoke and he, because he could not help it, or because he willed it, or for some other reason, or the want of one, looked down at her.

On the smell of the rain-washed earth and the wood-smoke from the cottage below the hill, the chirp of hidden grasshoppers, the pattering shower from the nut-boughs near the gate! Oh youth and ignorance and the first sweet taste of love and life!

The partridge, disturbed by the girl's coming, returned to rest chuckling softly. Kit looked round but did not move; he was not very close to her; it seemed almost as if he thought the place whereon she stood was holy ground.

"Bill!"—Polly's voice rang shrilly—"Bill! Are you up the lane? Come in at once!" For an instant even the grasshoppers ceased, then—"Bill! Bill!" came again, but no nearer, Polly did not wish to brave the mud of the lane needlessly.

"I must go," Bill said; "and oh,"—with sudden remorse for the lost moments—"I have not told you!"

"Tell me to-morrow." He was surprised at his own boldness. "I am staying here, at the River House, and you—"

"We are staying at the shop—you know." Bill grew rosy in the darkness.

"Yes, I know," he answered very softly.

"We go away on Thursday, and I must tell you."

"Thursday!"

"Bill!" Polly could not make up her mind whether Bill was in the lane or not.

But the culprit, who was thinking solely of the news she had to tell Kit Harborough, did not heed Polly. "I must tell you," she said, "you must hear, it is so unfair! But when? How?—oh, it is hard!"

"Hard?"

"Bi-ill!"

"I must go!"

"Yes, but first, when shall I see you? When will you tell me?"

"To-morrow early." Bill instinctively fixed her clandestine affairs for the time when the less energetic cousins were not awake to their responsibilities or her proceedings. "Early,—I'll bathe before breakfast."

"So will I; I often go for a swim first thing, and afterwards—"

"I will meet you,"—she finished for him—"about seven; I will tell you then."

"Bill! I can hear you talking! You are in the lane!"

"Yes, Polly, and I am going back across the field so I shall be home before you." And she was over the gate and down the field almost before Kit realised she was gone.

Polly turned round and went home; she had never ventured further than the mouth of the lane, neither was she certain that she heard Bill's voice in conversation, but she was exceedingly annoyed with Bill for having kept her standing there so long in the damp. She was also slightly annoyed with herself for being kept. "As if it mattered what Bill did!"

Only, as she was out (Bella had a romantic idea that she wanted to look at the sea by night) she thought she might as well see what Bill was doing. She had an instinctive feeling, based on her general distrust of humanity, that Bill was sure to be doing something wrong.

For the sake of her own satisfaction—Polly not possessing the disposition which “rejoiceth not in iniquity”—it is a pity she did not penetrate a little way up the lane, for she certainly would have seen Kit Harbrough had she done so. He stood where he was for a full minute after Bill had left him, absolutely still in the middle of the road. It did not matter; he was already so hopelessly late for dinner at the River House that a minute either way could make no difference. If he changed very quickly there was a chance that he would be in time for the cheese; earlier than that he could not expect to appear. Dinner and such mundane matters did not occur to him till after Bill had gone, and when they did he wondered what excuse he was to give to his host. On this subject he need not have troubled himself, for his elaborate explanations were thrown away, Mr. Briant not being deceived by them for a moment.

“Petticoat,” he observed briefly in answer to all Kit had to say. He was a man of some experience, and there was something in the boy’s manner, in his very indifference to dinner, which betrayed him to his elders.

He flushed hotly; it was desecration even to think of Bill and the meeting in the lane here.

“Hullo! It seems a serious case,” some one observed, and a man at Kit’s elbow inquired: “First, isn’t it, Harbrough? Lucky young dog, he’s never met a divinity before; he has got it all to come.”

Kit’s eyes flashed. “You are entirely mistaken,” he said coldly.

“All right,” his host said with great good-humour. “Did you send my telegram?”

Until that moment he had not thought of it: “I—I forgot it,” he was obliged to answer confusedly.

“What a deuce of a time she kept you!”

“She did not! She did no such thing!”

There was a roar of laughter, and Kit, realising his blunder, had the good sense to leave it and apologise for the neglect of the telegram. This being of but slight importance was forgotten by the party far more quickly than his unfortunate admission.

In the meantime Bill was also taking the consequences of her wanderings in the lane. Polly was severely reprimanding her for going out after dark, for keeping other people waiting about in the damp, and for gossiping with farm-labourers and other persons. To all of which Bill listened with the tolerant indifference with which she often treated Polly’s harangues. “Let’s have supper,” she said at last. “I have told you I went out because I felt as if—as if I should burst if I stopped in any longer. I had to go out, to get away; it was a pure accident that I met any one.”

“Oh, I dare say,” was Polly’s comment, after which she repeated several of her previous remarks with variations.

Never before in her life had Bill so longed to be alone—to be absolutely by herself, if it were only for half an hour. But it was out of the question; even when they went to bed the only solitude possible was the compromise of companionship offered when the cousins were asleep. She thought once of stealing softly down to the darkened sitting-room to spend an

hour there in the starlight, but the bed-room door rattled so terribly that she was certain in opening it to awaken Bella if not Polly. She was afraid of facing their curious inquiries, she who so seldom had been afraid before, who never knew when her conduct was strange or worthy to invite inquiry until the fact was plainly shown her; there was some subtle change in her.

She lay still on the outer edge of the wide low bed she shared with Polly, and tried to think. The room was very dark and quiet, yet she could not think. There was neither Kit nor Gilchrist in her mind, neither past, present, nor future; it was all a whirl, with for paramount feeling the thought of that unmade claim to the Harborough estates.

"It is not fair," she thought. "He shall know; they shall fight fairly; I will tell, whether it makes a difference or not." Then the picture of Wood Hall came into her mind, the stately house in the autumn of its days, the great hall, the solemn rooms, "Theo's, all Theo's! Theo there, Theo and the boarders!" She laughed softly, half hysterically, at the idea. "He thought I meant it," she said.

Polly muttered indistinctly in her sleep. Wood Hall and the gardens, the tangled rose-walk and the lawns, how green the grass would be now! The wood on the slope of the hill—there would be yellow leaves here and there, and the bracken would be golden—how very beautiful it all would be! September suited the place, but October would suit it even better, the long west front in the afternoon glow, the great arched doorway, all of it. And so on and on, a hundred vague ideas, a tangle of emotions, but never Kit; she never once faced the thought of him. At last she slept and dreamed; our dreams are our own; we are not accountable for them.

CHAPTER XXII.

IN the morning things looked clearer and emotions fainter. Sleep blots out some of the fancies and brings facts into a better working perspective. When in the morning Bill rose early to keep her appointment she had a distinct notion of what she was going to do. She got up and dressed quietly: for the first time in her life she was troubled because her gown was shabby; but she did not know why, for she had not consciously considered the question of Kit Harborough at all. She was going to meet him, it is true, but that was solely to warn him of the danger which threatened him. Still she was sorry her frock was shabby, and her old straw hat a little the worse for the plum turnovers and a good deal the worse for wear.

But she did not trouble herself much. By the time she had finished her bath she had forgotten about appearances; also to a certain extent she had forgotten her troubles, washed them away in the kindly sea or evaporated them in the sunny air: there was not, up to the present, anything so very much amiss in her world that still September morning. She was whistling softly when Kit found her, wringing her wet bathing-dress the while.

"Let me do that for you," he said.

She held the dress a moment. "You had better not," she said, "it will make your hands blue; the dye comes out like anything. The first time it got wet I was like an ancient Briton; it is not so bad now, but it still makes one a bit stripy."

Kit protested that he did not mind the dye and took the dress while she gathered up her towels and hung them in festoons about the tent, whistling when she was on the far side.

"Is that you?" he asked.

"Yes," she admitted, wondering if he thought it unladylike.

He did not; he seemed to think it clever. "What a mimic you are!" he said. "It was just like a chaffinch."

"I can imitate some things,—birds." Bill forgot her mockery of her fellow-men; she forgot all those things for there was a curious holy feeling about her just then.

Kit had finished wringing the dress and was carrying it now as they walked slowly along the shore. "Not all birds!" he was saying; "not a lark?"

"No, not a lark, I have never tried to do that; I don't think I could. I don't think there is anything quite like a lark's song; it is so completely, absolutely happy; I don't believe anyone could imitate that."

He agreed with her and then asked if she knew Shelley's Ode to the Skylark. They were not approaching the business of their interview very rapidly.

Bill shook her head. "I don't know any of his poetry," she said, "except a piece about the moon which we had to analyse in our grammar-class last Christmas. It was beautiful poetry, though I never could find the principal sentence."

"What a shame to give you Shelley for that!"

Bill thought it was too, and then Kit told her he believed she would like the Ode to the Skylark.

"Tell me some," she said.

He obeyed and repeated the greater part. Business was receding even further into the distance.

His was somewhat of a studious nature, and he had, moreover, the musician's ear for harmonious sound and the unspoiled heart to delight in beautiful thought. She was a greedy listener, her mind an empty well in its ignorance, in its insatiable desire

to be filled; she, too, had the love of melody, though never till that moment had she felt the need of the universe and of her own soul to be expressed in rhythm. But now the whole world somehow became one pulsing harmony, and they two wandered along the lonely shore in that dream which comes twice to no man. The air around them was delicate and crisp, fresh yet tenderly soft, the sunlight chastened and mild, threading with sloping bars the mist on the land, gleaming bright and pale on the wet sand and the incoming tide and the great white gulls that played in the creeping waves.

Business and the purpose of their meeting receded farther and farther; indeed, it might almost have been forgotten entirely had it not been reached by a most circuitous route through Byron and Heine. They had been speaking of the sea's place in poetry and concluded with the opinion that none of the poets had quite expressed their sentiments on the subject.

"They don't seem to get at the sort of mother-feeling," Bill said at last; "at least none of those we know do. I mean the kind of feeling of going home that you get when you come near the sea—you know what I mean? It seems sometimes as if it stretched out its arms to you and called you,—don't you hear?"

She listened and he listened too, for of course he understood what she was trying to say for both. He had felt it as she had, and neither had said it before, and both were certain of an understanding now, wherein lay the delight and the danger.

"Once," Bill said, "I saw four lines which were a little about the feeling I mean; do you know them?"

'Hail to thee, oh thou Ocean eterne!
Like voices of home thy waters are
rushing,

Like visions of childhood saw I a glimmering
Over thy heaving billowy realm.' "

Kit said he did not know the lines and asked whose they were; but she could only tell him that she had found them quoted in a book of Mr. Dane's. "I'll ask him," she said; "I dare say he will know, and he is sure to tell me. He is my great friend, you know, the rector of Ashelton."

"Ashelton!" Kit exclaimed. "Do you know Ashelton?"

"Yes," and then Bill remembered, and the mutual acquaintance with Ashelton and the surrounding district, which seemed so very delightful to her companion, wore quite another aspect to her. "I had almost forgotten," she went on; "I mean, forgotten what I had come to say; but I must tell you, I will tell you about it."

And forgetting the poets and the seductive calling of the sea she told him all,—of the Australian and his claim, of its strength, and of his decision to be silent until after old Mr. Harborough's death; she told him exactly how it stood, and how she thought it unfair he should not know what threatened him. He listened quietly as she talked, coldly, unconsciously demonstrating to her one good gift that an old family bestows upon its children,—the power to receive a blow unmoved, to hear with the silence of pride and to speak with the indifference of studied self-control. Kit Harborough had not much for which to thank his ancestors; the dead hand of the past was heavy upon him and the weight of tradition but little in his favour; nevertheless his birth and breeding helped him to receive Bill's blow with a proud composure, almost an indifference which roused her deepest admiration, though at the same time it touched her curiously.

She talked on fast to hide her own

feelings. "They seem to think," she said, though she had said it before and the whole case was painfully clear now, "they seem to think that if Mr. Harborough is left to himself he will not make a will; I don't know why."

"Because he does not like me," Kit told her. "He wishes me to have the property simply on account of the name. I am called Harborough because of the property, and I am,—was to have had it because of the name; but he wishes it so little that since he is sure I should have it, he would not set it down."

"But if he knew of Theo—of the other one?"

"He still would not make a will, or if he did it would not be in my favour; the other man is a Harborough and so fulfils his only condition. I have told you he dislikes me."

"He would dislike Theo a good deal more if he knew him," Bill said warmly; "he is going to cut down the wood if he gets the estate, and plough the land, and grow turnips in the park."

"I don't think you could make my uncle believe that." Kit's composure belied his feelings. "And if one could, if one could induce him to make a will, I don't believe I should care to do it, and besides, you know, it might not make much difference after all. Thank you, thank you very much for telling me,"—the composure was not nearly so marked; stoicism is not perfect at two-and-twenty; "it was very good of you to do it. I'm glad to know; it's much easier when one knows what's coming, but I can't exactly take advantage of it; you didn't really mean me to, you know."

"But the house," Bill pleaded, "the beautiful, beautiful house! Think of it, the long west front

with the sunset on it,—the great hall with the dragons on the mantelpiece—the rooms where all your people were born and died!"

"I know."

They were sitting on a pebbly ridge now; Kit ground his stick into the shingles and answered in a muffled voice, not looking at her. "But the thing is not settled yet," he went on after a pause. "He will have to fight for it whether there is a will or not; he may not win and,—and if he does, they are his people too; he is more really Harborough than I am."

"He does not care for them," Bill said; "he despises old families and he does not care for tradition; he would like the position but he does not really care for anything else; he would not love nor understand the place a little bit. He would save money, I dare say, perhaps make it, and in time build up a new family on the old foundation. He is just fitted to found a new family; he would do it splendidly, he has the right kind of brains and opinions; but he is not in the least fitted to carry on an old name,—he has not been bred up to it or educated for it. You don't know him or else you would understand."

"I understand very well indeed. But what is the use? Why do you talk about it?"

"Because," Bill answered vehemently, "the place is what it is; because of the house and the wood—think of cutting down the wood! Because it seems so likely he will get it, and if it were mine I would never let it go. If it had belonged to my people, as it has to yours, I would do anything—I should not care what—to get it and keep it."

The shingles rattled sharply against one another as Kit moved. "Do you think I don't care?" he asked almost

savagely. "But if it is that business of the will you mean, I can't do it. I don't suppose it would make a difference, and anyhow I can't do it; you know I can't."

"Then I will," Bill said. "I will see Mr. Harborough and explain. I will get him to make a will; I believe I could."

"No," Kit exclaimed, "no, you must not do that. It would be no better than if I did; it would be taking an unfair advantage of the other man,—promise me you will not do it."

Bill hesitated. "I have taken an advantage of him already in telling you," she said.

"That is different; it was only warning, preparing me for what is to come; you were not using your knowledge against the other man; you would not do that."

Bill was not so sure; though, true to her reflective nature, she felt at the moment that perhaps he was right. "Then you will give it up," she said at last, "you will let a man who does not understand have the house and everything?"

"Not unless I am compelled."

"And will you be compelled? What do you think?"

"I don't know; it sounds pretty bad as you have told it, of course. It may not be; I can't tell."

Bill looked hopelessly out to sea.

"It is my fault," she said, more to herself than to him, "all my fault."

"Your fault?" he asked. "How? What have you to do with it?"

"It was through me that Theo knew of his claim, through the mass in the Harborough chapel, and it was I who got the mass to be read. Yes, you have heard about it, of course, but you did not know it was my doing; nobody does except one person, but it was, all the same. Mr. Harborough had it said to please me,

or at least because I suggested it; it was my idea, and it was all through that service that Theo heard of his claim to Wood Hall. A man, an antiquary, one of those interfering people who are always digging in ancestral dust-heaps and finding things which had much better not be found, heard about the service and came to inquire into it. He came and he inquired, and poked about, and found out a lot about the chapel and the Harbours; then he met Theo, and talked to him, and found out all about him too. Before that nobody knew anything of Theo, and he did not know anything of the claim; he never troubled about his relationship to you other Harbours; but between them he and Mr. Wagnall pieced it all out, and there you are; that is how he found out he had a claim. If it had not been for that mass bringing Mr. Wagnall to Wruglesby it would never have been discovered; it is all my fault."

Kit did not share this opinion. "It is not your fault," he said decidedly, "not a bit in the world; you never knew what would come of it."

"I did it, all the same."

"But you are not to blame; you are not responsible because the truth, if it is the truth, has been found out, and no one would blame you for it if you were. I don't think you to blame, and I am the person most concerned, after this Theo."

"Oh, he doesn't think I have had anything to do with it," Bill said, smiling a little at the idea.

"Very well then, that is settled," Kit said more lightly; "you are not to blame; nobody thinks so, neither you, nor I, nor Theo. By the way, you seem to be very intimate with Theo,—great friends or great enemies, which is it?"

"Both," said Bill smiling; "I am going to marry him."

Suddenly the smile died out of her eyes, out of her heart, out of sea and sky and world, and for the first time in her life she was afraid to think.

Kit turned and looked at her full, his well-bred, stoical face expressing nothing, only his grave eyes were very grave as he said slowly: "You are going to marry him?"

She nodded, meeting his eyes for a minute; and then she looked out to sea, driving her palms deep among the small pebbles as she sat, one hand on either side, staring rigidly before her.

The gulls dipped down to the breaking waves and circled above in the pale-toned sky; sea and sky alike were as tinted silver, the whole day delicate, tender-hued, like the colours found in a pearl. A great peace, a great silence lay everywhere; there was no sound but the ripple of the waves as they crept up the sand, till they reached the shingle where the girl sat and broke with tiny spray almost at her feet.

"We had better move; the tide is coming up."

The voice of the man beside her aroused her. He suddenly seemed a man to her, a boy no longer; it seemed too as though there was a great gulf between them. She rose automatically and they walked along the shore in the direction of the village. He was very kind and polite; there was an indefinable difference between his manners and those of the people she usually met, but it only made her the more conscious of the difference between herself and him. He talked as they went, easily and well, on indifferent topics, the cliffs, the shore, the places of interest about, the peculiarity of the stones on the beach. Once he picked one up, dark grey and heavy, a flint sea-urchin, he told her it was, rather an uncommon fossil, he said, as he gave

it to her. She took it, and talked about it and a dozen other things, in spite of her consciousness of the gulf, as easy and as self-possessed as he. Why not? Was she not Bill, the mimic, the player's child? She was sure just then that he had been a player, a strolling mummer, a singer ever on tour, perhaps even the circus-clown Polly called him. And she,—she was a clown too, a buffoon, a fool, for all that she wore no motley, to make old men laugh with her songs and quips, to charm young men for a moment with her hundred changes,—“all things by turn and nothing long”—nothing except the little gipsy creature that was under all and that was miles and miles away from Kit Harborough of Bybridge, from him and the women of his class. She knew those women, tall, fair, white-skinned, serenely unconscious. She was a long way from them, from everyone in the universe, farthest of all from this boy with his considerate

courtesy, his polite speech, his accurate clothes. She was painfully conscious of his clothes and even more so of her own, of her work-stained hands, her too rapid movements. She was conscious of it all, but more than all of a passionate desire to run away and hide with the wild things which were her kin, to run away not from him alone but from all her world, to run right away into the woods and hide even from herself, if it could be.

But she did not run away, as she would have done some months earlier; pride held her back and crushed the wild nature down, helping her to politeness and teaching her to give her little brown hand at parting much as Kit Harborough did. So with some formality they said good-bye, and parted at the top of the cliff-path, he to the left to the River House, she to the right to the little shop where Bella was waiting breakfast and Polly finishing a belated toilet.

(To be continued.)

DOWN THE DANUBE IN A CANADIAN CANOE.

II.

We spent a week in the quaint old town of Ulm, but our adventures there have properly no part in our journey down the river. Only, in passing, I must mention the courtesy of the Danube Rowing Club. Fritz Miller (who rowed at Henley in 1900 for the Diamond Sculls) is the leading spirit in a list of members who showed us all possible kindness. They housed and mended our canoe, varnished it afresh, and gave us better maps. The secret charms of picturesque Ulm unknown to the tourist were shown to us; and in the evenings we used to meet for music and supper in a quaint little club-room that hangs half of its Roman masonry over the rushing river.

Here the navigation of the Danube (such as it is) is said to begin. The fierce current allows no boats or steamers, but immense barges (called *Ulmer schachtel*) laden with merchandise, are floated down the current to the Bavarian towns below. On arrival they are sold for lumber, the return journey being impossible.

The Rowing Club takes out eights and fours. Rowing with all their might they move two miles an hour against the current; and it may well be imagined that, with this training, they are well nigh the first rowing club in Germany.

There was a great deal of rain while we were in Ulm and we started again on a rapidly rising river, full of floating rubbish, and rushing at a pace that made it a pleasure merely to stand and watch it from the bank.

The Bavarian bank (Ulm is on the frontier line of Bavaria and Würtemberg) displayed black sign-boards with the kilometers marked in white. We timed our speed by one of Benson's chronometers and found it to be over twelve miles an hour. It was like travelling over a smooth road behind fast horses. My note-book gives an average day, the day, for instance, we left Ulm.

June 19th. The members of the Rowing Club came down in force to see us off at eleven o'clock. Flags were flying in our honour and we heard the men shouting *glückliche Reise* as we shot the middle arch of the bridge on the waves of a rather nasty rapid. The bridge was lined with people, but we only faintly heard their cries for the thunder of the waves. This exceedingly rapid water makes awkward currents as it swirls round the pillars of the big bridges. Behind the arches are always whirlpools, which twist you sideways and toss you from them with ridiculous ease. A wrong turn of the steering paddle and the canoe would be sucked in instead of thrown out, and then—! At a little distance below the bridge the eddies of the whirlpool from adjacent pillars meet in a series of crested waves. The only safe channel lies exactly in the middle. The canoe rises, slaps down again, all its length a-quiver; the first wave breaks under the bows and some of the water comes in, but before enough is shipped to be dangerous the frail craft rises again with a leap to the next wave. Then the race begins. The least wrong twist to left or right and the waves break sideways into the canoe and down she goes. It takes so little water to sink a laden canoe.

To-day, for the first time, we heard the famous song of the Danube,—famous at least to us who had read of it in so many different accounts. It is a hissing, seething sound which rises everywhere from the river. You think steam must be es-

caping somewhere, or soda-water fizzing out from an immense syphon among the woods on the banks. It is said to be the friction of the pebbles along the bed of the river, caused by the terrific speed of so great a body of water. Under the canoe it made a peculiar buzzing sound accompanied by a distinct vibration of the thin bass-wood on which we knelt.

We swept through Bavaria much faster than we wished, but it was impossible to go slowly. The river communicated something of its hurry to ourselves, and in my mind the journey now presents itself something in the form of a series of brilliant cinematographs. Delightful were our lunches at the quaint inns of remote villages—black bread, sausage, and such beer!—Lauingen, a town of the sixteenth century, where the spokesman of the crowd said, "I suppose you're both single;" Donauwörth, in a paradise of wild flowers, where the Lech tears in on the right with leaping waves; Neuburg, with a dangerous stone bridge and the worst rapids we had yet encountered. Then a long stretch where the swamps ceased and the woods began to change. Instead of endless willows we had pine, oak, sycamore, birch, and poplar. The river was a mile wide with outlets into lagoons, like Norfolk Broads, that ran parallel with us for miles and were probably empty mud flats at low water. Fishing-nets were hanging up to dry along the shore, and hay lay sunning itself on the narrow strips of the banks. We passed Ingolstadt, a military post, and then the river dipped down before us into blue hills and we came to Vohburg,—destroyed by the Swiss in 1641, and now, apparently, nothing but a collection of quaint chimneys and storks' nests—and, soon after it, Einzing, near Abusina, a Roman frontier station established fifteen years before our era. Trajan's wall crossed the

river near here and extended north as far as Wiesbaden.

Then the river narrowed between precipitous limestone cliffs and we entered the gorge of Kehlheim. At its very mouth, between impregnable rocks, lay the monastery of Weltenburg, the oldest in Bavaria. The river sweeping round a bend into the rocky jaws made landing difficult; but we accomplished it, and entered the old courtyard through an iron gate with graceful stone pillars. There were everywhere signs of neglect and decay. The monks' quarters formed one side of the square and the church another; a third side was a wall of rock; the fourth was the river. It was secluded, peaceful beyond description, absolutely out of the world. The air was cool, the shadows deep. Fruit-trees grew in the court-yard, and monks (there were only thirteen in all) in black gowns were piling up wood for the winter. A priest was intoning vespers in the church, which boasted a beautiful organ, marble altars, and elaborate carving of the usual gilded sort. The sunshine filled the painted air. Outside over the neglected walls crept vines, and at the far end of the courtyard a wild rose-tree, covered with sweet-smelling blossoms, grew at the foot of crumbling stone steps that led under shady trees to a chapel perched on the cliffs. We toiled up in the heat and were rewarded by a glorious view; from above the monastery was shut in like a nest between river and cliffs.

Later in the day we were driven by a violent thunderstorm to the first landing-place we could find. It was a few miles below Weltenburg in the very heart of the gorge. With surprising good fortune we found a cave leading deep into the mountain, and in less than ten minutes we were dry and snug before a fire burning cheer-

fully for dinner. It was a strange camp, — the storm howling outside and the firelight dancing down behind us into the interior of the cave, which was unnecessarily full of bats.

At Ratisbon, the *Castra Regina* of the Romans, we were solemnly warned not to attempt to pass under the bridge. "The whirlpools are savage," they told us. "Of the seven arches of this six-hundred-year-old bridge, all but one are forbidden by the police." Leaving the canoe half a mile above we landed and walked down the shore to examine. "Boats *have* gone through," said a pompous man on the bridge as he pointed out the worst places to us, "but even if they got under the arch they have always been sucked in *there*!" He pointed to a white seething circle of water. "You'll never get through that in your cockle-shell, and you'll be arrested even if you do."

"Arrested,—how?" we asked. By way of answer he raised his eyebrows and held up a fat hand in eloquent warning. However, we carefully selected our channel from the bridge, and twenty minutes later were coming down stream towards the arches as cautiously as our speed would permit. People ran along the shore waving their hats and shouting to us to stop. The bridge in front was black with the crowd waiting to see the *verrückte Engländer* upset. We reached the arch and recognised our channel. The water dropped suddenly in front of us and the canoe dipped her nose with it. We were off. The bank and the shouting people flew past us in a black streak. I was just able to recognise one man, our pompous friend, standing below the bridge shading his eyes with his hand, evidently determined to get the best view possible. The roar of voices dwindled behind us into a murmur and a minute later we were out of sight; Ratisbon, bridge, whirlpools,

and townfolk were things of the past. We were not arrested, but perhaps the police are still trying to catch us.

After this came a dull spell as we crossed the great wheat-plain of Bavaria, winding for two days with many curves and little current. Every morning here the workers in the fields woke us early, and praised the boat, and asked us the usual questions, and told us the usual falsehoods about the depth of the river, the distances of the towns, the floods of past years, and all the rest of it. We made no halt at Straubing (*Servio Durum* of the Romans), or at Deggendorf where the Isar adds its quota of mountain-gathered waters.

Another day was very dismal,—cold showers and storms of wind following one upon another. We crouched under bridges, trees, and anything else that gave cover, paddling fast between the squalls to keep ourselves warm. The plain of Straubing affords little shelter. Towards evening, however, the river made a welcome turn towards the mountains, and we camped on a high bank among clumps of willows with thick woods behind them. New potatoes, dried prunes, and onions in the stew-pot were points of light in a gusty and otherwise dismal meal. We pegged the tent inside and out. All night the wind tore at it, howling; but a gipsy-tent never comes down. The wind sweeps over it, and finding an ever lessening angle of resistance, only drives it more firmly into the ground.

Gradually, now, we were passing out of the lonely portions of the upper river. The country was becoming more populated; larger towns were near; railway-bridges spanned the river; steamers and tugs raced down, and toiled up it.

A few miles above Passau we camped on an island, and were visited by an inquisitive peasant, who saw

our fire and came over from the mainland in a punt. "Are we trespassing?" I asked. "No; the island's usually under water." This was all he ever said in our hearing, though he stayed with us, it seemed, for hours. He was a surly-looking fellow in the roughest clothes, with trousers turned up to his knees, and bare feet. His curiosity was immense; with arms crossed and legs wide apart, he stood and stared in silence with expressionless features. We had some villainous Black Forest cigars, bearing on the label the words *la noblesse*, which we sometimes used to get rid of obnoxious people. We gave him two. Knowing nothing about the Greeks and those bearing gifts he nodded his thanks,—and smoked both to the very end! Yet he never stirred, his eyes never left us. It was impossible to prepare our frugal dinner under this merciless scrutiny. At length I prevailed upon him to go over for some eggs, and to bring them to us in the morning for breakfast. He left without a word in his punt, and a sense of oppression seemed to go with him. But, just as dinner was over and we were settling round the fire to our tobacco, he suddenly reappeared. He had brought the eggs in his hat, and he was dressed this time in his Sunday clothes! For an hour he stood beside the fire, answering no questions, volunteering no remarks, till at length my friend went up, shook hands, wished him good-night, and straightway disappeared into the tent. I did likewise, and then the fellow took the hint, and went.

This happened at a place called Pleinling. Another thing also happened there. On the smaller of the arms into which our island divided the river was a weir. With empty canoe, and dressed in shirt and trousers, we practised shooting this weir next morning. The day was hot, and

our other things were meanwhile drying on the bank. The silent peasant came over to watch the proceedings, and with him came a picturesque old fellow, most talkative and entertaining, with white hair and a face like Liszt's. When he saw us preparing to shoot the fall he was much excited. "Have you wives and children?" he asked shaking his head warningly. I went over first while my friend took the camera, and got his picture a second before the canoe plunged into the foam and upset. The old fellow, whose name was Jacob Meyer, was not in the least put out. He leaned on his scythe and watched me struggling in the water with the overturned canoe without making any effort to help. Afterwards, when we gave him a *noblesse* he took a lean, dirty little purse out of his pocket, and said, "How much am I to pay for it?" And when we promised to send him the photographs he asked the same question again.

Some hours later we reached Passau, a few miles from the Austrian frontier, and this last glimpse of Bavaria, after traversing its entire breadth, was the sweetest of all. But only from the river itself can you see the quaint old houses leaning over at all imaginable angles; the towers and crooked wooden balconies; gardens hanging from the second storeys; walls with ancient paintings dimmed by wind and weather; and decayed archways showing vistas of tumbling roofs, broken chimneys, and peeps of vivid blue sky at the far ends. The picture it made in my mind as we paddled through it in the late afternoon is uncommonly picturesque,—a jumble of gables, towers, bridges, and the swift muddy Danube rushing past it all in such tremendous hurry.

Half a mile below, the Inn poured in from the Tyrolean Alps and carried us into the finest gorge we had so far

seen. The new comer brought cold air with it, and we swept into the gloomy ravine between high mountains with something like a genuine shudder. More and more swiftly ran the river as it compressed itself with an angry roar into a few hundred yards' width and swirled into the hills raging at the indignity thus heaped upon it. It became very difficult now to choose camping-places, as the stream fills the entire gorge, leaving only narrow ledges at the foot of the heights where a tent can stand. Upon one of these ledges, broader than the rest, we managed at length to land. A projecting point of rock sent the water flying out at a tangent into mid-stream and formed a strong backwater below it. Into this we contrived to twist the canoe's nose and on a little promontory, covered with yellow ragwort, we pitched our tent. It commanded a view for two miles up the ravine with the sinking sun at the far end. A boy was tending half a dozen cows among the scanty bushes; a queer little imp with wide-open blue eyes, who watched us land and prepare our camp with no signs of fear or surprise. We gave him cherries and chocolate, and he stuffed his mouth with one and his pockets with the other; then he came and stood over our fire and warmed himself without invitation, as if it had been made for his special benefit. A quaint little figure he cut with his pointed, feathered hat and big eyes. He told us that his name was Josef, that he lived two miles further on, went to bed every night at nine o'clock and got up every morning at four. Then he took off his hat, said good-night, and vanished into the bushes after his cows.

The sun set in a blaze of golden light that filled the whole gorge with fire; but when the glory faded, the strange grandeur of the place began

to make itself felt. The ravine was filled with strange noises, the wooded heights looked forbidding, and the great river rolled in a sullen black flood into the night.

Next morning we passed a big rock in midstream with a shrine perched on its summit; and just beyond it we entered Austria and visited the customs at Engelhartzell, a village on the right bank with an old Cistercian monastery behind it. There was no duty to pay, and we raced on past the mountain village of Obermühl, and out of the gorge into a fertile and undulating country basking in the fierce sunshine.

Neuhaus, with a fine castle on a wooded height, and Ashach, with a view of the Styrian Alps, flashed by. The river from here to Linz is full of history, and its muddy waters have more than once borne crimson foam. There were bloody fights here during the revolt of the peasantry of Upper Austria. Ashach, in 1626, was the insurgents' headquarters where (as also at Neuhaus) they barricaded the Danube with immense chains to prevent the Bavarians from assisting Count Herberstein, the Austrian governor, who was shut up in Linz. When in flood the Danube escapes from this narrow prison with untold violence. Everywhere the villages bear witness of its path, though most of them lie far away from the banks. High upon the walls lines show the high-water marks of previous years with the dates. "A single night will often send us into the upper storeys," said a woman who sold us milk and eggs; "but the water falls as quickly as it rises, and then we come down again." She took it as a matter of course.

The shores became lonely again and our camps were rarely disturbed. One morning, however, about six o'clock we heard someone rummaging

among our pans. Then something stumbled heavily against the tent, and there was a sound of many feet and an old familiar smell. We rushed out, to find ourselves in the centre of a herd of about fifty cows. One had its nose in the provision-basket; another was drinking the milk standing in the pail of water; a third was scratching its head against the iron prop of the kettle. Their curiosity was insatiable; every time we drove them off they returned. While my friend was frying the bacon and I was performing ablutions lower down on the river bank, a squadron swept down upon us unexpectedly by a clever flank movement, and one of them whipped up my pyjamas near the tent and ran down the shore with them on her horns. My friend dared not leave the bacon—and I was *in nudis*! It was exciting for the next few minutes.

In blazing heat that day we came to Linz, the capital of Upper Austria. Below it the Traun and the Enns flowed in, and the Danube became a magnificent river rolling through broad banks alternately wooded and covered with crops and orchards; and now, too, we begin again to see vineyards, of which Bavaria had seemed bare.

For a long time, strange as it may sound, we had been enforced vegetarians and drinkers of condensed milk. We could rarely get fresh milk, though we trudged many a mile to farmhouses and inns for it; either it was all used for butter, or had already been sent to the towns. Of course it would not keep sweet in our canoe under the blazing heat, and we could only trust to the chance of getting it an hour or so before we needed it. But, when we were lucky enough to get it, how delicious were those messes of boiled bread and milk! Meat, too, was hard to come at, except

at certain hours. The butchers in the small towns open their shops at certain times only. Not one of them would ever trouble himself to supply us with merely a pound of meat, and more would not, of course, keep fresh.

We were drawing near Vienna now, but first we passed through another fine gorge. It began at Grein (where the Duke of Coburg's castle, Greinburg, looks down from the heights) and before we emerged breathless at the other end we had come through the famous whirlpools known as the Wirbel and Strudel. The river, narrowed by half its width, plunged with many contortions round sharp corners between high cliffs and past the island-rock of Wörth. Rising in long, heaving undulations the water was alive with whirlpools, twisting and sucking, and throwing us here and there, gushing up underneath us with ugly noises and seething on every side. There was no foam, no crests, no waves or spray; it was like a monstrous snake trying to writhe through a hole too small for it. The shore raced by at top speed, and steering was uncomfortable for a time. In former years these whirlpools were a source of great danger to the navigation; but in 1866 the Emperor had certain rocks blown up and now an inscription on the face of the cliff testifies to the thanks of a grateful people. The traveller in a big steamer might think this description exaggerated. He would not think so in a canoe.

It is impossible to mention, as one would like, all the abbeyes, churches, monasteries, ruins, islands, and other points of historic interest that throng the banks. The scenery is enchanting as well as enchanted. There were some interesting castles in these mountains, and grim they still look even in their ruins. Aggstein rose in solitary grandeur on a peak that

commanded miles of the Danube in both directions. It was built in the twelfth century by the Kuenings, a robber-race which stretched chains across the river, plundered the traffic, and drowned the owners. We could still see the Blaschhaus Tower from which the sentinel announced the approach of boats. Its was a plundering, murdering family, and was finally destroyed by the great Ulrich von Grafeneck.

Before Ybbs (the Roman Pons Isidia) we saw the wonderful ruins of Dürrenstein where Richard Cœur de Lion was imprisoned. Here, on the very spot, it was interesting to recall how he was recognised when walking through the fields at Erdberg (since merged in Vienna), captured, and handed over to his enemy, Duke Leopold of Austria, who entrusted him in turn to the keeping of the Kuenings. They kept him for fifteen months (1193) in the great castle of Dürrenstein beneath whose grim walls we passed in our canoe. In Austria the story is implicitly believed, whatever we may think of it in England.

The following day we saw the blue hills of the Wiener Wald rising behind Vienna, and before long we were obliged to don our best clothes, and send a porter down from our hotel to fetch the luggage from the bathing-house where the canoe lay below the Reichsbrücke.

We did not stay long in Vienna. Rooms in July seem stuffy after a tent, and a fly-spotted ceiling is a poor substitute for the stars.

The canoe was packed full of provisions ready to start when our first accident occurred. The river had risen a couple of feet and was very swift. My friend had just taken off his shoes and placed them on the top of the other luggage. Several of the crowd, in their misguided fashion, were trying to help us, when I

stepped into the little space vacant for me in the stern. How it happened no one knew; someone let go too soon, and she was instantly swept out sideways into the current. The next second I was dropped out neatly into five feet of water, and the canoe, settling till only the tops of the luggage remained in sight, went full tilt down stream. There were fifty yards of clear water, and then came a row of barges tied ten feet from the shore and leaving an inner channel. Into this the canoe luckily was swept; had she careered off into midstream probably we should never have seen her again. With boat-hooks and poles we ran along the banks to catch her before she banged into the barges. My friend ran in his socks. The hotel-porter, the bath-house man, and a dozen idlers all followed shouting different things at once. But the canoe and the mad current had the start of us. Crash! with a sound of rending, splintering wood she banged into the nearest barge and turned completely over. A few seconds later the various articles appeared on the surface again, and there began a sort of obstacle-race that might have been highly comical had it not been so serious. Our beds with the cork mattresses floated high out of the water. Jumbo (a huge kit-bag holding our wardrobe) came next, up to his neck. A smaller waterproof bag, tied at the neck and holding bread and cameras, followed, spinning merrily. The provision-basket (filled with the morning's careful shopping and some tea just arrived from England) showed only its nose above the surface. Coats, hats, socks, maps, tent-poles and tent followed in motley array at the end of an idiotic looking procession. Every time an article banged into a barge it went under for a few seconds, and mean-

while the canoe was crashing on among ropes and poles in the van. The heavy articles defied our efforts, and Jumbo pulled one man bodily into the water when he tried to drag it ashore.

In the end, however, most of the things were saved. The men caught the canoe as she spun past a barge, and held her till help came. All the articles, too, were fished out except those that would not float. Thus, we lost our lantern, the prop of the kettle, a pair of my friend's shoes, an odd one of mine, the ridge-pole of the tent, and my town hat and coat. It was wonderfully little. The bows of the canoe, however, were completely smashed in; and to make it worse, the rain suddenly came down in torrents and a cold wind blew from the north.

Then a carpenter appeared on the scene and said he could mend the canoe and make a new tent-pole. The people of the bath-house took our things in to dry, while we jumped into a closed carriage and drove back into Vienna, my friend with no shoes on his feet, and I without a hat on my head. Yet, such was our good luck, that three hours later we were spinning down the river in the mended canoe; the sun was shining brightly, our things were dried, we had a new tent-pole, Vienna was out of sight below the horizon,—and when we landed for camp the place was so lonely that, on climbing the bank, I looked straight into the eyes of a great stag with branching antlers.

For two days at racing speed we journeyed through wild and lonely country towards the frontiers of Hungary. The river was like a wide lake,—no houses, no boats, no token of man except the daily steamer between Vienna and Budapest. We passed signs of Roman days and Turkish occupancy strangely mingled :

Carnuntum, where Marcus Aurelius is said to have written much of his philosophy; Theben on a spur of the little Carpathians, with its rock-perched fortress destroyed by the Turks in 1683 when they swept on to besiege Vienna, and again by the French in 1809. At its very feet the March (the boundary between Austria and Hungary) comes sedately in, and the Danube received a new impetus as we passed below its shadow and into Hungary at last.

The Germans had been kind in a negative fashion, the Bavarians courteous, the Austrians obliging; but the hospitality of the Hungarians was positively aggressive. "Nothing is too much," they used to declare when we expostulated with them on the overwhelming nature of their attentions, "nothing is too good for Englishmen. Everybody will tell you the same in Hungary." Kossuth was the magical word, and hatred of the Austrians the key-note of their emotions. We blessed the generation that had welcomed him in exile and went on our way rejoicing. The crowds no longer stood gaping; they helped without being asked. When we landed for provisions they ran down to hold the canoe, while others went into the village to make our purchases more cheaply for us. Even their questions were intelligent. German is of uncertain value here, and we had carefully learned the Magyar words for the articles we most needed. "Now you begin to learn Magyar when it is too late," laughed the woman in a Pressburg shop where we bought milk and eggs and bacon; "but it's no matter; you can't starve in Hungary." The Hungarian name of the town is Pozsony. It was formerly the capital, where the kings of the Hapsburg race were crowned. Below it the Danube branches into three arms, one of which makes a

circuit of fifty miles and comes in again at Komorn. The main river is a couple of miles wide and full of islands, separated by rapids and falls. An officer assured us that we should get lost for days together unless we carefully kept to the main channel. The country is utterly deserted, save for the little black landing-stages of the steamers that appear every twenty miles or so, the villages lying far back and protected by high earthen banks. The loneliness and desolation of these vast reaches of turbulent river and low willow-clad islands were impressive; in flood-time it must be grand.

The water escaped into so many side channels and lagoons that the depth of the river was most variable. Grey shingle-beds appeared often in midstream, and over and over again we were swept into them before we could cross to deeper water. It was difficult to distinguish them in time from the muddy, foam-streaked river, until we learned that the cormorants invariably used them for fishing-grounds; and then we took the black bodies in the distance as warning signals that saved us much dangerous wading. The velocity of the stream is so great that one almost expects to see the islands swept bodily away. Big grey hawks circled ever over head and grey crows by the thousand lined the shores. That evening, after crossing and re-crossing the river, we found a sheltered camp on a sandy island where pollards and willows roared in the wind. As if to show the loneliness of the spot an otter, rolling over and over among the eddies, swam past us as we landed. About sunset the clouds broke up momentarily and let out a flood of crimson light all over the wild country. Against the gorgeous red sky a stream of dark clouds, in all shapes and kinds, hurried over the Carpathian mountains, and when we went to bed a

full moon cast the queerest shadows through the tossing branches. We dined,—prosaic detail!—off tongue, onions, potatoes, tea, and dried prunes which we stewed and ate with quantities of beetroot sugar.

Next day the river grew wider, swifter, and even more deserted. At Korteljes we landed to buy provisions, though only the watchman's hut was in sight. As we stepped on shore my hat blew off and floated down stream. At once the man (who spoke a little German) went into his hut and produced one of his own which he begged me to wear; it was a greasy wide-brimmed felt, but I could not refuse it, and he seemed delighted. He directed us to a farm a mile inland for milk and eggs, and gave us the correct pronounciation of the necessary words. The farm stood on the broad plain in a grove of acacia trees, with snow-white walls and overhanging thatched roofs, forming a square, within which were oxen, buffaloes, pigs, geese, and romping children in brilliant skirts. The older girls had yellow kerchiefs on their heads; one little girl, in flaming colours, was chasing a chicken in and out among the trees and oxen; all stopped to stare as we approached, swinging an empty milk-can. Through the farmhouse door I got a glimpse into a spotless kitchen, and a most courteous woman with brilliant dark eyes sold us what we required very cheaply. I took off my new greasy hat to them when we left, and the children followed us to the river, a motley escort.

On we went down the great rushing stream, ever flanked by a sea of silvery willows swaying and bending in the wind, reed beds, ten feet high, alternating with stretches of grey shingle. Between the wooded islands vistas opened in all directions; narrow glades where the river sent out new

arms in patches of sunshine with the faint sound of water tumbling over distant shallows; while down some far blue reach, filled with the afternoon shadows, we could see immense herds of cattle, swine, and flocks of geese, feeding in meadows lined with poplars and birch trees. Horses in vast quantities roamed along the banks, watched by herdsmen who wore cool white skirts instead of trousers. Often, in the backwaters, oxen, horses, buffalo, pigs, and geese were all crowded together trying to keep cool in the great heat.

At Komorn, rising with its fortress just above the dead level of the plain, we laid in provisions. The grocer was inquisitive: "Where have you come from? Where are you going to? How do you cook? Where do you sleep? Are you not afraid of grasshoppers and snakes? What an awful distance you have come—the source of the Danube, where is it? You are both quite young, aren't you? But you are so enormous,"—and so on, and so on.

From here we saw the blue mountains that encircle Budapest,—not more than forty miles away as a crow would fly it, but a splendid loop of sixty-five miles by the river. Budapest draws one like a magnet. There is a suggestion of delicious wildness about it born of I know not what. The very name seems set to some flying fragment of the wild national music,—a bar of the *csárdás*, or of the wailing Hungarian songs that thrill with such intense virility. The West, too, sinks lower on the horizon when Budapest is reached, and the Danube sweeps you on through the Iron Gates to Turkey and the Fekete Tengerig (Black Sea).

Willows, reeds, and islands have all vanished now, and there were no sudden whirlpools in mid-stream. With majestic dignity that disguised

the real speed, the mass of water, a mile to a mile and a half wide, swept steadily down under that fierce heat towards the mountains. We kept to mid-stream and were never tired of watching the banks slip by with their ever changing pictures: open shore; fields with barley standing in sheaves; vineyards coming down to the water's edge; cottages with thick thatch and white walls; villages full of wild, over-grown gardens, and groves of acacia trees of brilliant washed green. We landed for milk at a farmhouse on the right bank and found that the proprietor spoke English and had travelled in England and Norway and studied in Vienna. "It's only twenty-six kilometers to Budapest," he told us. Later on we overtook some peasants in a boat full of vegetables, and kept pace with them for a little, while we chatted in German. "It's a little over forty kilometers to Pest," they said. Boats became frequent after this, broad, flat-bottomed, laden with farm-produce, and rowed by men and women who took their hats off to us and asked many questions in bad German. All agreed on one thing,—that the Austrians were a poor lot of people compared with the Hungarians; and all differed on another thing,—the distance to Budapest. It varied with every boat, and at length we became so confused with the arguments of the spokesman in German and the mocking chorus of the rest in Hungarian, that we almost expected to hear that we had already passed it, or were perhaps on the wrong river altogether.

To avoid calamities we increased our speed and left the string of boats behind. In the afternoon we came to Gran. The dome of its huge Italian basilica dominates for miles the plain we had just traversed, but looks like a round gleaming pebble

beside the mountains that rise behind it. The charms of this quaint little town made us realise that time is after all but a form of thought; in other words, we stayed too long. At half-past six we entered the wide deep valley of these magical mountains hoping to find a camping-place so soon as we were beyond the town. The sun was hidden; the mountains stood outlined in purple against a wonderful sky, with long thin clouds just touching some of the higher peaks; the water glowed as though fires burned beneath the waves. Mile after mile we followed the windings of the valley, the hills folding up behind us, but opening ever in front again into new and darker distances. But no camping-place appeared; one side was too steep, the other treeless. The shadows lengthened and grew deeper; the hills changed from purple to black; the lights of villages twinkled across the river as across a wide lake. They fairly lined the base of the hills, and secluded camping-spots were evidently things of the past; there was not even an island.

Eight, nine o'clock passed; it became too dark to cross or recross with safety. We hugged the left bank, eagerly scanning the shore under the steep hills and waiting for the moon to rise. It was ten o'clock when the moon topped the mountains of the other shore and filled the valley with silver. We found a level yard or two below some vineyards, unpleasantly close to the abode of the proprietor, and there made a small fire and dined late off eggs and cocoa. The scenery was more thrilling than the meal: the dim hills rising through the moonlight; the white river filling the space between as if the whole valley were sliding noiselessly past, the fragrant air, warm and still, shot here and there with fireflies,—and Hungary,—wild, musical, enchanted

Hungary! The fire had died down and we were smoking at the mouth of the tent when sounds of music floated to our ears, and presently a barge of peasants towed by three men along the shore came slowly up the stream. Cymbals and violins were playing a national air and a few low voices were singing. The barge floated past as if no one had seen us, and the music died away in the distance.

And on the mere the wailing died away.

Several hours later the returning voices and violins woke us in the tent as the party went down again too far from shore to be visible to the eye.

A man fishing woke us early and asked if the *weinküter* (watchman of vineyards) had not disturbed us. Luckily he had not. "That's because it's Sunday and he's overslept himself." In spite of this warning we breakfasted leisurely, and then paddling down stream in blazing sunshine landed a mile below at Visegrad on the opposite bank. This little town, with its ruined castle, and fortress destroyed by the Austrians, nestles among the mountains, and here the good folk of Budapest come in summer to their villas among the acacia trees. Everybody spoke to us, helped to pull up the canoe, told us what to see, where to get good coffee or cooling drinks, described (with painful detail) the remaining twenty miles to Budapest, and showed themselves in all ways most courteous and obliging. Gipsy-music sounded everywhere among the trees, and the peasants in bright Sunday costumes lent colour to the scene.

Below Visegrad, which we left with much reluctance, begins an island which stretches the whole twenty miles to Budapest. Taking the inner channel we paddled peacefully all day under blue mountains in a haze of delicious heat, past vil-

lages, ferries, churches, castles, private villas, acres of vineyards over the slopes of the hills, and vast herds of horses and oxen standing in the water, till we camped at sunset on a treeless bit of plain at the extreme point of the island, only a mile from Budapest. It was like camping on the Brighton downs. With difficulty we collected scraps of wood enough to make a fire that would boil water. It was a windless night, and our candle stood tied to a stick in the open air with a motionless flame. The moon, rising late, showed rounded curves of bare hills behind us,—and then, two figures approached us cautiously from the river. They came to the outside of the fire-light circle and stopped; but at our invitation they came within and smoked the last of our *noblesse* cigars—poor fellows! Night-fishermen they were, short, thick-set, dark-faced Huns. They drank our cocoa and explained their strange-looking nets to us while waiting for the moon to rise higher. All night long they fished, and on their way home to bed at five next morning they looked in to give us a hearty good morning and the information that the cows were coming.

The thunder of hoofs confirmed this, and we got up in time to protect the tent from a herd of several hundred cattle. A herder followed them, a dwarf-like creature with a pole-axe as big as himself, and a badge which proclaimed him Government keeper of the plain (Crownland) where all men's cattle might feed on certain conditions. He spoke no German, but he understood the meaning of a plate of veal, and he finished our meat (two pounds) in about ten minutes. Then he drank some cocoa, asking, with a wry face, if it were *paprika* (Hungarian pepper).

It was piping hot on the treeless plain, and Budapest lay waiting for us. We shaved and donned our town suits. The herder, grateful for his meal, helped to carry our things to the canoe, and, long after we were off, stood shading his eyes with his hand and staring after us. We drifted lazily down another mile of steaming hot river and landed at the wharf of the Hunnia Rowing Club on the right bank,—nearly a thousand miles from the sleepy little village in the Black Forest where we had embarked six weeks before.

ALGERNON BLACKWOOD.

ENGLISH HEXAMETERS AND ELEGIACS.

A CRITIC in one of our literary journals, reviewing Sir Lewis Morris's *HARVEST-TIDE*, gave Mr. William Watson the honour of setting a precedent in the employment of a classical metre in English verse. He found that Sir Lewis had used elegiacs in his lyric "The March of Man,"—one of the poems included in *HARVEST-TIDE*—and his discovery prompted this critical declaration :

He has seemingly been reading Mr. Watson's "Hymn to the Sea," for he adopts its English pentameters. The metre, of course, is classical ; but (save for a couplet of Coleridge) we are not aware that any poet before Mr. Watson had attempted to naturalise the metre. Consequently it is of Mr. Watson we think when we read such verse as this :

"Man that is born of a Woman, the
pride and the shame of Creation :
Man that soars upwards to Heaven,
and sinks to the nethermost Hell."

It is unfortunate for his journal, and also for Sir Lewis Morris, that the critic should be unaware of the difference between pentameters and elegiacs. We do not all read new volumes of poetry immediately after publication ; many of us are prone to accept the estimates given in accredited organs of literary opinion, and the majority are contented with a perusal (more or less superficial) of the reviews, and never see the works themselves on which the critics have based their commentaries and judgments. If, then, those who, by virtue of the knowledge and experience with which they are accredited, are placed in a position of serious responsibility,

show themselves but ill-equipped for their duty, there is surely cause for protest. A writer who plainly declares his ignorance of the difference between pentameters and elegiacs cannot be accepted as an authority on a poem in either of these forms. For aught we know to the contrary, Mr. Watson's "Hymn to the Sea" may be written in pentameters, but, if it is, it is certainly different in form from "The March of Man" by Sir Lewis Morris. The critic's reference to Coleridge complicates instead of elucidating the difficulty. Coleridge was fond of experimenting in classical metres. One remembers the hexameters penned to Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy during the sojourn in Germany.

William, my teacher, my friend ! dear
William and dear Dorothea !
Smooth out the folds of my letter, and
place it on desk or on table.

But then there is much more than a couplet in this metrical exercise, which on the contrary runs forward well on towards forty lines. Coleridge's hexameters in his "Ad Vilmum Axiologum," his "Hymn to the Earth," and his "Mahomet" may also be dismissed as not to the immediate purpose. So, probably, may the pentameters after the manner of Catullus, and then we are left with two sets of couplets exemplifying classical metres. But in the one case the title used by the poet himself is the Homeric Hexameter, while in the other it is the Ovidian Elegiac Metre. In which of all these forms Mr.

Watson cast his "Hymn to the Sea" it is not possible for one unfamiliar with that poetic achievement to decide; but there need be no hesitation in saying that if he used any of them the result could not be what we call pentameters. On the other hand, Sir Lewis Morris in "The March of Man" writes what Coleridge calls the Ovidian Elegiac Metre and illustrates thus:

In the hexameter rises the fountain's
silvery column;
In the pentameter aye falling in melody
back.

The critic of HARVEST-TIDE, then, being apparently unfamiliar with the subject he has undertaken to discuss, has employed a misleading terminology, and by his attempt at furnishing illustrative examples has only made confusion worse confounded. In the second place, he shows for a reviewer a very slender grasp of literary history. According to his view of the subject Mr. Watson's "Hymn to the Sea," written a few years ago, was the first attempt to introduce the ancient pentameters into the English metrical system.

We may now assume that he means elegiacs, especially as that is the metre of the poem which he assails. Mr. Andrew Lang contributes something to the complex character of the situation, and not a little to the perplexity of the plain man, by writing to the journal in question that he and Lord Tennyson had composed "rhymed elegiacs" before Mr. Watson was born. That directs the attention to an earlier, if still not very remote, stage of poetic accomplishment, and it also introduces a new feature into the discussion. Rhyming is not characteristic of the elegiacs produced by Coleridge and Sir Lewis Morris, and one is hardly surprised to find Mr. Watson replying to Mr. Lang with a declaration that he never com-

posed any rhymed elegiacs. That would appear to eliminate Mr. Lang from the arena into which he so arbitrarily dragged Lord Tennyson, and to leave the matter where it was before his hapless intervention. The point then is this. The critic of HARVEST-TIDE, speaking with the anonymous and oracular authority of the organ that he represents, asserts that the metre used by Sir Lewis Morris in "The March of Man,"—the classical metre known as elegiacs—was introduced for the purposes of an English poem by Mr. Watson. That is to say, in round numbers, that the fashion thus set by Mr. Watson is one that has existed for less than a decade. This is a very fresh view, and one envies the critical historian that has trod only so far on the fascinating path that leads towards poetical origins. Let us see how the matter actually stands.

In one of his imitations of Horace Pope writes:

Spenser himself affects the obsolete,
And Sidney's verse halts ill on Roman
feet.

The poet is arguing that inevitable inequalities exist in the writings of even the greatest literary artists, and this couplet is part of his illustration. Spenser's language and some of his forms and methods are mainly those of an age antecedent to himself, and Sidney, who was himself a poet, as well as a "very perfect gentle knight," lent his great influence to a passing fashion of classical metres. The friend of Spenser and Sidney, and perhaps the University tutor of the former, was Gabriel Harvey, one of the most scholarly and, in some respects, wrong-headed men of his day, and an enthusiast for what he considered the dignity of form indispensable to properly constructed English verse. The couplets and octave

stanzas ennobled by Chaucer would not suit his cultured tastes, and the new sonnetteering of Wyatt and Surrey, after a fashion introduced from Italy, was unscholarly and effeminate. Harvey, in his own fashion, had a hold of that large and probably endless question as to the comparative value of ancient and modern methods, which has so often been, and probably will continue to be, discussed from so many points of view. It is an old and incontrovertible saying that a man must act according to his lights. A farthing candle serves its purpose when no more brilliant illuminating force is possible, and an argumentative spirit, destitute of scientific training, may be held excusable in defending the creed that the sun goes round the earth. All knowledge is relative, and Gabriel Harvey's accomplishments and reflections induced him to consider that his view of poetical form was final. He was one of the most learned men of his time, an unsuccessful candidate for the post of Public Orator of his University, a Doctor of Laws of Oxford, and advocate to the Prerogative Court of Canterbury. His Latin works display not only scholarship but resource, feeling, and dignity. Unfortunately for the serenity of his experience, and for the excellence of his reputation, he fell into controversy with the wits of his day, especially with Robert Greene and Thomas Nash. This feature of his career does not specially concern us now, and the curious will find it duly discussed and illustrated in the works of the respective authors as edited by Dr. Grosart, and in the chapter entitled "Literary Ridicule" in D'Israeli's *CALAMITIES OF AUTHORS*. What really immortalises Harvey is his connection with Sidney and Spenser. It was under his influence that Sidney wrote his curiously exotic eclogues in *THE*

COUNTESS OF PEMBROKE'S ARCADIA, and it was he that brought the two young men to a knowledge of each other, thereby serving to promote the career of one of the chief glories of English poetry. Yet it is almost certain that for a moment Harvey's influence was likely to have a deteriorating effect. Spenser seemed enamoured of hexameters and elegiacs, and anxious to satisfy his tutor and friend with evidence of his skill in their production. In a letter addressed to Harvey by Spenser about the time at which he finished the *SHEPHERDS' CALENDAR* we find him asking his opinion as to this *tetrasticon* :

See ye the blindfolded pretty God, that
feathered Archer
Of Lovers' Miseries which maketh
his bloody game ?
Wot ye why, his Mother with a Veil
bath covered his Face ?
Trust me, lest he my Love haply
chance to behold.

It would have been a serious matter for English poetry had Spenser gone off on this tack, instead of keeping to the course that led to his discovery and delineation of the enchanted land of *THE FAERIE QUEENE*. That he was nearly devoting himself to the classical metres advocated by Harvey is shown by a statement towards the close of the same letter: "I mind shortly at convenient leisure, to set forth a book in this kind, which I entitle *Epithalamion Thamesis*." Fortunately this book never came, and when Spenser's spontaneous *EPITHALAMION* was produced it proved one of the triumphs of lyrical beauty and music. Meanwhile, the poet did not fail in his regard for Harvey, who is the Hobbinal of his allegories, and the scholar who sits apart and discriminates among men of the world,

Like a great Lord of peerless liberty ;
Lifting the Good up to high Honour's
seat,
And the Evil damning evermore to die.

Harvey had his little day, and he had his influence, important on the one hand and trivial and nearly retrogressive on the other. He was a scholar who loved and fostered scholarship for its own sake, and he was an ardent pioneer on a way that could lead to no important and satisfactory issue. Like men both greater and smaller, he believed the little quest of his scholarly fancy was the true glory of his career. "If," he warmly exclaims in one place, "I never deserve any better remembrance, let me be epitaphed the Inventor of the English hexameter!" Pathetic, no doubt, this is in what cannot but seem to the calm judgment its erroneous enthusiasm, its devotion to a forlorn hope. It is typical of the quaint short-sightedness associated with human endeavour. The attitude implied in the exclamation of the classical metrist is not that of the humble and modest spirit which whispers "An ill-favoured thing, sir, but mine own;" it is rather that of the genius who knows that he has achieved, and that posterity will avenge him for the neglect and the abuse of his contemporaries. There was pride, then, in Harvey, but he must have been winning as well as proud, for he retained through life the friendship and the respect of Spenser. Modern literature owes him something too, for his advocacy of English hexameters and elegiacs. His successors have done by them infinitely more than himself and his friends accomplished. The nineteenth century produced great poems in both forms. Lord Tennyson, as Mr. Lang reminds his readers, amused his occasional leisure with metrical exercises in Harvey's vein, but it may be added that such things count for almost nothing in his work. Both the strength and the weakness of the English hexameter have been amply proved

in the *EVANGELINE* of Longfellow, and in Clough's *BOTHIE OF TOBER-NALUCH* and *AMOURS DE VOYAGE*; but the most brilliant and decisive example of it will be found in Kingsley's *ANDROMEDA*, where classical metre and theme meet and mingle in apposite and graceful adjustment. Take, for instance, this glorious description of a garment from the Olympian loom:

Then on the brows of the maiden a veil
bound Pallas Athené;
Ample it fell to her feet, deep-fringed,
a wonder of weaving.
Ages and ages ago it was wrought on
the heights of Olympus,
Wrought in the gold-strung loom by
the finger of cunning Athené.
In it she wove all creatures that teem
in the womb of the ocean;
Nereid, siren, and triton, and dolphin,
and arrowy fishes
Glittering round, many-hued, on the
flame-red folds of the mantle.
In it she wove, too, a town where gray-
haired kings sat in judgment;
Sceptre in hand in the market they sat,
doing right by the people,
Wise: while above watched Justice,
and near, far-seeing Apollo.
Round it she wove for a fringe all herbs
of the earth and the water,
Violet, asphodel, ivy, and vine-leaves,
roses and lilies,
Coral and sea-fan and tangle, the blooms
and the palms of the ocean:
Now from Olympus she bore it, a dower
to the bride of a hero.

Between hexameters and elegiacs no very wide gulf is fixed, and it seems likely that a master of the one might very well achieve distinction in the other. One of the most charming elegiac poems in the English tongue is Mr. Arthur Munby's *DOROTHY*, though its heroine was nothing more than a maid-of-all-work. In this poem, which appeared in 1880, the writer performed a notable service, for not only did he show how nimbly and effectively elegiacs could be utilised, but he reminded us that Eng-

lish girls could once hold the plough. Perhaps in some remote parts they may do so still, and the occupation will befit them fully as well as that which some of their sisters elsewhere find on pit-heads and in other unattractive spheres. May it not also be better for the girls themselves, and better in the long run for the peasantry, that, instead of converging into the crowded cities, they should abide to some extent by the old ways, minding the dairy or even carting and driving the plough when occasion requires? The country begins to miss the influence of such a powerful individuality as that presented in the character of Mrs. Poyser. The shrewd and able farmer's wife was at one time an educative force: "She opened her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue was the law of kindness." Her maids, even the maid-of-all-work, had a profitable experience in her service. They learned the meaning of duty, and their experience was valuable for the generations that followed them. Only substantial national benefits could arise from a character depicted thus:

Oh, I have yet to complete the list of
her many employments:

First, she can read, as I said; read
in the Bible, I mean,—

Off on a Sunday night, when the household
meet in the evening,
Reading aloud by the hearth, taking
her turn with the rest:

And, as I said, she can write; she can
fashion her name in a round hand
Fit for a ploughman to see under his
own in the book:

Then, she can sew, right well: for
stitching and hemming and darning,
Whether to make or to mend, none
are more clever than she;

Hard as her fingers are, fine needlework
only excepted,

None in the parish can show stitching
more subtle than hers:

Samplers, too; long ago she wrought
a most beautiful sampler,

Gay with a criss-cross row, splendid
with Adam and Eve;

Framed in her attic it is, a joy for them
that come after;
Such as her mother made,—such as
they never make now.

These are but a few of Dorothy's accomplishments, for she understood all about the dairy, and could tell how to rear "cade-lambs"; she could tend the cattle, harness a cart-horse, successfully feed a pig, and show how it should be killed and cured; she knew the habits of birds and four-footed beasts, and she dealt by them skilfully and tenderly, even as was her habit when the sickness of a neighbour needed delicate attention at her rough but honest and kindly hands. In the fields, at all seasons, she was competent to take her place, able to rival the men, and easily leaving laggards behind.

Ah, what a joy for her, at early morn,
in the springtime,

Driving from hedge to hedge furrows
as straight as a line!

Seeing the crisp brown earth, like waves
at the prow of a vessel,

Rise, curl over, and fall, under the
thrust of the share;

Orderly falling and still, its edges all
creamy and crumbling,

But, on the sloping side, polish'd and
purple as steel;

Till all the field, she thought, looked
bright as the bars of that gridiron

In the great window at church, over
the gentlefolks' pew:

And evermore, as she strode, she had
cheerful companions behind her;

Rooks and the smaller birds, follow-
ing after her plough;

And, ere the ridges were done, there
was gossamer woven above them,

Gossamer dewy and white, shining
like foam on the sea.

The elegiacs seem somehow specially adapted to the delineation of these idyllic scenes and interests, and one may at once congratulate the poet on his success, and his readers,—inclusive of those whose familiarity with classical experiments in English terminates with the work of Mr. Watson—on

the enjoyment that awaits them in the perusal of his charming romance.

If elegiacs are suitable to the description of the personality and the activities of an English maid-of-all-work at the end of the nineteenth century, they should also lend themselves helpfully to the due elaboration of a classical theme in English verse. Whether he was influenced or not by the example set by the author of *DOROTHY*, Mr. Browning followed him with his "Ixion" in the same metre, which he included in his volume *JOCOSERIA*, published in 1883. This might have been expected to appeal to the historical critic of verse, even if the anonymous *DOROTHY* had not come under his notice. Alike for the subject, the eminence of the poet, and his success under the conditions with which he bound himself to treat his theme, "Ixion" eminently deserves attention. The myth, which is one of the most palpable and impressive of those summaries due to the spiritual wrestling of the ancients, has been variously treated, but, of course, never just in the same way as it has been by Browning. It gives the poet the opportunity of advocating his favourite doctrine of serious, persevering endeavour, and of emphasising the creed of development through consistent strength of individuality. Ixion may have suffered an awful doom because of spiritual pride, but his personality sustains him as he reaches, in his dizzy whirl, even beyond Zeus towards the fascinating object of his quest. The following quotation will show that the construction of this poem displays features very different from the precise arrangement, dexterously woven diction, and easy effectiveness of movement presented in *DOROTHY*. At the same time its unheaven sternness of aspect, its rugged massiveness, and the towering strength

and majesty of its advance give it a measure of irresistible attraction.

Baffled for ever—yet never so baffled
but, e'en in the baffling,
When Man's strength proves weak,
checked in the body or soul—
Whatsoever the medium, flesh or
essence,—Ixion's,
Made for a purpose of hate,—clothing
the entity Thou,
—Medium whence that entity strives
for the Not-Thou beyond it,
Fire elemental, free, frame unen-
cumbered, the All,—
Never so baffled but—when, on the
verge of an alien existence,
Heartened to press, by pangs burst
to the infinite Pure,
Nothing is reached but the ancient
weakness still that arrests strength,
Circumambient still, still the poor
human array,
Pride and revenge and hate and cruelty
—all it has burst through,
Thought to escape,—fresh formed,
found in the fashion it fled,—
Never so baffled but—when Man pays
the price of endeavour,
Thunderstruck, downthrust, Tartaros-
doomed to the wheel,—
Then, ay, then, from the tears and
sweat and blood of his torment,
E'en from the triumph of Hell, up
let him look and rejoice.

As an expanded statement of a great mystery this is eminently characteristic. The onward movement has the inevitable embellishments of parenthesis, side-thought, labouring phrase, picturesque and suggestive image, and seems ready to disappear under the weight of it all, but at length is happily accomplished. The elegiacs are Browning's, and are therefore not as those of other men or poets are; but they are correct in form and readily stand the test when examined for themselves and apart from the purpose they serve in building the sentences that set forth the argument. In reading them one straightway recalls the vehement decision given by an eminent scholar of other days as to Wordsworth's

poetical rank. Fundamentally, that distinguished critic asserted, poetry must be melodious: "It must have music in it," he cried, "to make it attractive;" and therefore, as he failed to detect the indispensable first principles in Wordsworth, he stoutly proclaimed himself "no Wordsworthian." It is common to find the same objection, in some cases in a greatly intensified form, to Browning's verse. In these particular lines the reader may be pardoned for failing at first to detect any pervading melody. Words seem to be placed together more for the purpose of producing confusion and contradiction than in order to give information and pleasure. It takes some time to unravel the apparent entanglement, to detect the drift of the author's purpose, and when that has been done the ethereal melodious essence has probably ceased to impress. One has, therefore, to begin afresh and study the lines from a purely metrical point of view; and then the discovery is made that the poet, despite his argumentative throes and his philosophic rapture, did not disregard the quality of his versification. Not only will this become clear, but it will also appear that he had time to think of occasional dainty tricks of art,—such, for example, as one sees in the effect here and there of a tripping and successful alliterative line; and then the reasons for objecting to his methods may gradually seem less relevant and strong than they were on the first blush. Browning furnishes the best of all possible texts for the discussion of the question as to whether poetry should not be its own instantaneous interpreter. This elegiac presentment of Ixion's spiritual wrestlings may be recommended as an exceptionally good subject for the student's purpose, as the full consideration of all it offers will imply an examination of its philo-

sophy, its argument, illustrations, and imagery, besides a careful estimate of its metrical system. It will probably be found that the man with eyes to see and ears to hear will discover the purpose and the poetical merits of this as of other problematical essays in verse. *SORDELLO* was long a standard example of difficulty, and Mr. Lowell undoubtedly stated the case for a very large number of baffled readers, when he asserted that he understood perfectly the first line of the poem and the last, but was hopelessly at a loss to grasp the significance of all that lay between. It is here as with other things: the reader has to be considered as well as the poet, and the interpretation of difficulties will largely depend upon the equipment of the interpreter. Thus we come back to the demand for absolutely transparent poetry, and find that the question is one that has to be settled on considerations that are entirely relative. Meanwhile, it may be concluded that Browning's eminence as a poet is due not only to what he says but also to the manner of his saying it, and that both will impress his readers the more deeply as they become (in words he once used himself) fully "qualified to judge." The "*Ixion*," may be taken as an experiment in elegiacs, just as the versification of other poems may be regarded as more or less experimental, but at any rate it is an experiment of a distinguished order, justifying itself by its striking success.

In 1887 Sir Lewis Morris published his *SONGS OF BRITAIN*, one of the poems of the collection being the "*Physicians of Myddfai*," written in elegiacs. The theme is a myth of old Wales, preceded by a graceful descriptive prologue and closed with a passage of characteristic reflection. A widow's son, tending his herds among the lonely hills, wooed and won a

beautiful lady of the lake, whom through inadvertence he lost in advancing years in accordance with the conditions of an irrevocable spell. She retired to her native waters, where her sons continued to seek her and failed not to profit by her benign influence.

Often at evening, the youths would climb to the mystical lake side,
Culling the simples that grew on the slopes of the desolate hills—

"Pant y Meddygon," men called it,
"The dingle of the Physicians"—

And with them, wherever they went,
their mother invisible came,

Teaching them all that 'tis lawful to know of the secrets of Nature,

And the powers of healing that seem to be God's own prerogative gift.

Such was the knowledge they took from their loving, mystical mother,

In all our wide Britain was found no leech so skilful as they.

The author of the "Physicians of Myddfai" has justified his claims as

a composer in classical metre. When, therefore, in his *HARVEST-TIDE* he includes the elegiac "March of Man," he makes an offering of interest to the serious student of verse, who reads for the sake of the best that is provided and does not merely float on the gauze of critical flippancy. Sir Lewis Morris here sets himself to grapple with a knotty problem, and it were vain to expect a dainty nimbleness of movement with the diction suitable to such a theme. It makes no difference who wrote elegiacs before him,—just as it is of no consequence, in a final estimate of achievement, who were sonneteers before Mrs. Browning and Rossetti; but if the question is to be raised at all, and especially if there be an inclination to depreciate because others have been in the field before, then, we submit, perfect accuracy and absolute sincerity are indispensable elements in its discussion.

PRO-BOER IDEALISM.

ONE characteristic of any grave public crisis is that it brings out, as a great wave of heat brings out on grass the ground-plan of long-buried buildings, the diverse cleavages of temperament that divide a nation.

The accentuation of a fact unnoticed before, reminds us how much there is,—of instinctive impulse and feeling if not of reasoned opinion—to which we are only not hostile at other seasons because we are indifferent. But at such moments of trial a craving sets in for the real national unanimity on which alone action of desperate vigour can be based. The smooth dogmas of tolerance (a negative and limited creed at best), the pseudo-Radical convention that all opinion is entitled to an equal hearing and everything that can be represented equally worthy of representation, fall to a discount; and a process of elimination, a sort of moral or physical Pride's Purge, begins, which ends by leaving only the characteristic genius of the nation free, with girt-up loins, to pursue its destiny.

What that genius, that destiny may be is doubtless, in the long run, the affair and responsibility of all of us; yet the process sketched above, is, we believe, on one scale or another, a familiar and chronic episode in history, and it is one now present.

After all, it is a fact, familiar enough to all who have to do with public or administrative business, that a large number of excellent and immaculate people are, by a mute conspiracy of the rest of us, elbowed or cajoled out of power on the real, but unstated, plea that they are too

good for this imperfect world. Nor do we think that injustice can be done to the politicians known as Pro-Boers, for want of a better name to express the popular feeling against them, if we dignify them as Idealists of this species. Conscious of the purity of their motives (for we do not here speak of a few frantic partisans whose business in life is to foul their own nest) they indignantly complain of the intolerance of the majority of their fellow-citizens. But do they realise (a conviction to many of us unpalatable and late acquired) that the direct pursuit of the absolutely good in politics is, more often than not, harmful in proportion to its directness?

The Pro-Boer party,—though of course no political party has stood up to call itself by that name—consists, we believe, mainly of what we may call tired Englishmen, of the remnant of those who, in the old days of the flowing tide that so suddenly ebbed, by their academic view of the weary burden of empire in Egypt, India, and elsewhere made Radicalism a thing impossible. It includes doubtless all those who, committed to the obese and unhistoric doctrine that war is the worst of evils, are bound to deny that it has ever produced an enduring settlement or a solid mutual understanding between friend and foe. And it embraces more emphatically, we think, a number of cultured persons living at home at ease, intellectual and moral, to whom the mere spectacle of the initial stages of the development, for example, of a great mining colony is

in itself *anathema maranatha*, a thing that should have been relegated to the obscurity of an Elizabethan age. In the few organs which have advocated their views (while commercial exigencies rendered this possible) in the speeches of its professed representatives,—especially in a collection of such orations, breathing nothing but the purest piety, by Mr. J. E. Ellis, a prominent critic of the national conduct—we seem to scent this irreproachable but dangerous Idealism, an Idealism amounting in fine to something very like Robespierre's "Perish the colonies rather than one principle!" We had the pleasure of listening to a certain eloquent, if not famous, speech of Professor Bryce in the House of Commons,—the best exposition perhaps of what we may call the Pro-Boer attitude; and the general impression it conveyed, to at least one of his hearers, was certainly that we have tried to convey. There, in South Africa, were the Empire-makers, rude, toil-stained, (self-interested, if you please,) at work. Here, at home, was the Idealist cultured, comfortable (in the sense, that is, of not finding his daily conduct wrested, as it were, by tyrannous circumstance and facts of nature in the direction of what we may call Elizabethan irregularities), enjoying the civilisation of an empire (made in a fashion he must daily deplore),—at play. He would not mind, we suppose, being called an Anti-Elizabethan; but has he grasped the fact that ours also are spacious times, that distance is in some ways, and in spite of steam and electricity, the equivalent of time, even of a century or so, that there is much of that crude Elizabethan individualism (by which we, Idealists and all, are what we are,) that can never be extinguished but with our extinction?

Take, for example, a typical and

recurrent phrase in Mr. Bryce's speech in relation to the great question, the subject (as much as any one matter can be said to be) of our present difference with the Boers,—the treatment of the native races, notoriously a point where the British colonist, as compared with French, German, Spaniard, Portuguese and Boer (especially the Boer), has systematically broken down. It is on this point that there still rings in our ears the utterance of the passionate high-souled Pro-Boer, "*Our hands are not clean.*" Alas, no; and therefore (for otherwise what purport, at such a moment, has this damaging apostrophe?) we must not use them, even though it be to remove with as little violence as may be, things, systems, practices, and constitutions infinitely more corrupt and contaminated. No; we must leave these abuses to the delicate care of a special *posse* of angels from Heaven who will doubtless descend to clear them up in ample time for the Judgment Day. Thus will the Idealist be spared the spectacle of that error and injustice involved too often in the conduct of the best intentioned of (English) human beings.

How indeed can our hands be clean, when we know that they are stained with a hundred individual acts of injustice and tyranny, to which the respectable Englishman, comfortably unfolding his *Times* in a West End flat feels rarely tempted, the scandals which those who know whisper into our ears about English residents, capitalists, missionaries all the world over! That, however, is not the question. The question is does our occupation, with all its rude, clumsy, and extremely human activities, make, on the whole, and taking the rough with the smooth, for progress? If it does, then we have still some ground for that belief

in ourselves which is the only sane ground of national action.

Natives, of course, are a somewhat unsavoury topic for the refined and gentle Englishman at home. Left alone in their natural wilds, disporting themselves as hordes of blood-thirsty savages or bestial cannibals, they contribute to the picturesque colouring of that background against which civilisation should stand out, sharply contrasted like a newly built mission-hut against the uncleared jungle. As neighbours or protégés of the white man they become a dangerous part of that gross material world, the world of gold-mines, oil-wells, and rubber-forests, contact with which is so peculiarly deleterious to the (English) moral system.

Deprived of his well-washed spear, and compelled, or persuaded, to work, the savage soon attracts the attention of the numerous philanthropists whose enthusiasm (in the famous phrase applied by Napoleon the Third to the slave-trade agitation) varies "with the square of their distance from its objects." Threatened with flogging, and now and then subjected to perhaps excessive discipline he becomes—well, it is better not to pursue the subject. Let us merely reflect on the different points of view of the humane owner or employer of half tamed savage labour and that of a political Mrs. Jellyby. The point is that gentlemen whose nerves, olfactory or cutaneous, have never yet apprehended the presence of a black man (though we do not blame him any more than another of God's creatures for being what he is) have repeatedly urged upon the government of a great empire that it ought to know no distinctions of colour, should, in a word, as we think THE DAILY NEWS recently phrased it, be "race-blind." It sometimes seems to be thought that this is part of the Imperial business of true

democracy. If so, let us hasten to assert that its business is nothing of the kind. Having politically and socially obliterated, so far as may be, all unreal distinctions, the legacies of an inexperienced past, its business is to lay the foundations everywhere of a truer and more real aristocracy; and, incidentally, to be blind to nothing which concerns the task of government.

It is not a question of what particular phrase comes sweetest to the lips of those of us who live at home enjoying what we should understand to be the expensive luxury of a homogeneous and well-ordered civilisation. It is a question of the inevitable subjection of the simplest class of human animal, harsh as some of the means employed for the purpose may be, to the first rude essentials of political life, which means, in the language of Lord Kitchener's reassuring proclamation, "the just supremacy of the White Races."

Nor is the case one where we can safely urge that it should remain unattempted if the enterprise involves so much that we, with the tastes and ideals bred in our comfortable little island-home, would rather not contemplate. The thing must be done. If you will not let it be done only moderately well, it will be done worse. If our hands are not clean enough for the task, it will fall into hands still less fitted for it. To approach the problem with exalted abstract notions of colour-blindness and equality of races would merely be to court failure. Justice to our inferiors, like other ideals, is not achieved by the most direct and obvious pursuit thereof,—on paper. We see, for example, how American practice, imprisoned in an Idealist formula of equality, has, so to say, corrected the constitutional Rights of Man with the foot-note in red ink,—*modified, in cases of colour by Lynch Law.*

Our business, therefore, is not to consider what would be the position of Black Races in a Utopia designed in the full glare of our English humanity of 1901, not to fetter ourselves with any ridiculous assumptions, but to seize eagerly on the maximum of humanity we can get out of the class of person who is certain to be in intimate industrial relations with the native, and, never relaxing, gradually to tighten and enlarge our grasp.

The matter is closely connected with another even more provocative of hysterics. "The bare idea of a war carried on for the sake of gold," we remember reading in an early outburst on the subject, "must shock the conscience of every Englishman." Without speculating as to the moral attitude of Drake or Raleigh when confronted by such problems, we can see that there are nowadays many good people to whom gold, except in the form of secure quarterly dividends, is a thing shocking in its indecent nudity. But putting aside the objectionable actuality of the particular business of money-grubbing (which seems to throw all the responsibility for the first *irritamenta malorum* on those who dig them up), and the sentimental preference of a pastoral Arcadia to the scarred and disembowelled Rand, it may be observed that a war carried on for the sake of the free development of the resources of a country is a war of the most eternally natural and inevitable kind. And a war between those able and willing (even greedy, if you please,) to undertake such a task and those whose temper and character is opposed to it, is only likely to end in one way. When Stevenson, in his striking address to the aborigines of Samoa, adjured them to dig, cultivate, make roads, and use their country, for, if they did not, some one else would, he was merely stating a great natural

law to which Great Britain remains as truly subject as the late Transvaal Republic.

"Develop your resources, mineral or vegetable, or someone else will." That is the rule, and it is no use buying rifles, said Stevenson, in order to stave off its operation. Nor does the accident that the "someone else" has oftener than not for centuries past been a person of Anglo-Saxon blood in the least affect the question. Yet, if Britain has a charter, her alliance in this respect with the laws of nature and the demands of mankind is certainly a part of it.

The business, or mission, for which the word *Empire* is rather a romantic misnomer, naturally subjects us to much hostile criticism. But is it likely, in the first place, that the chief actor on the world's stage should command the applause of those who passionately desire to come on, or have long been hissed off it?

We hear much of the unpopularity of England on the Continent, though no one seems to know of a great and active nation that was ever universally beloved. But the fact is that there is a great deal of truth in these persistent charges against us of tyranny and egotism, and even of a certain duplicity; the former embedded in our nature, the latter perhaps rather superimposed by the party-system. We do not really know how to do the thing better, and doubtless our sanguine hopes and promises do get a good deal entangled among the dirty actualities of time and space. Montalembert in his famous Apology for Great Britain written half a century ago, admitted that our pushing and grasping foreign policy (what is now called Imperialism) was open to much censure. "It is only," he adds, "when you compare it that your judgment is more lenient." In that case he would like to know who is going

to cast the first stone,—“Not Russia, not Prussia, and certainly not France.” Not even, we might perhaps add, that oldest and most precocious of our children, America, unless it were from that armchair of isolation and inexperience which she is now quitting to take up her share of the White Man's Burden.

These then are the criticisms of academic Idealists, and very often of the Pharisees who bind burdens, heavy and grievous to be borne, for the shoulders of other people, they themselves having neither the will nor the opportunity for carrying them. This Pharisaism, by the way, has long been a characteristic of the Radical party, as it is now of the Pro-Boer party.

“Do you mean to say,” we hear it indignantly asked, “that this — war [the reader can adjust the adjectives to the shade of feeling he is most familiar with] could not have been avoided by superior diplomacy?” My dear sir, we will go even further. We think that if our diplomacy had been—you know what—a good half of our national troubles might have been avoided. What we want to know is, what right has anyone to demand that our diplomacy should be ideally perfect? It has only got to be reasonably good and fair; we were only bound to make a reasonable, not an unlimited, effort to settle the matter peaceably. Yet I never hear you ask, could this — war have been avoided if Boer statesmen had been merely a little more enlightened and a little more reasonable than they were? And as to the answer to that question, history will have little doubt. Nothing is more certain than that Great Britain, in her then blissful state of ignorance, was ashamed to declare war against what she regarded as a small and insignificant Power, that the electorate would never have approved such a step, and that their

present attitude is largely based on the consoling fact that it was not taken.

With the conduct of the campaign (which must afford a cheering example to those who hope for the gradual extinction of war by the thousand and one sentimental restrictions affecting it) we are not here concerned. The great British nation has appeared for some two years past in the light of an amiable old woman fooled by a racecourse sharper. We have avowed our ignorance and stupidity, and even been pilloried for it by *THE TIMES* in the sackcloth and ashes of Mr. Kipling's doggerel verses. It is perhaps true that for centuries past no two belligerents ever had less knowledge of each other. But in history, to return to the broad facts of the matter, certain great data, if we are to form any conclusions at all, must be taken for granted.

Our ignorance and stupidity constituted a serious national misfortune,—nothing more. That we should be unaware of the artfully concealed and rapidly acquired resources of a petty State only recently dependent upon us for its very existence was doubtless a disgrace to our Intelligence Department. But that the Boers should have evolved, or that their leaders should have inculcated, such a preposterous misconception of the nature and resources of the British empire was one of those public and international errors that amount to crimes,—crimes for which a people has often to pay with its existence.

It is this ineradicable misconception, more than the much talked of Boer Independence, for which there was no room in the same continent with ourselves. We have heard too much of this high-sounding phrase, as if Mr. Kruger's countrymen were pious anchorites whom we had insisted on dragging back into the wicked

world. Independence is not even the ideal of Great Britain and her colonies, but an ever closer alliance, an ever more practical connection, under the same broad principles of liberty and justice, with all the world. Isolation, independence of the most important facts of history and economics, is an impossible anomaly; and if Krugerism did not mean this, it was the most wicked of political gambles.

It is a mistake to suppose that a small State owes nothing, not even civility, to a great one, or that, if this obligation be not recognised, the latter, as *THE DAILY NEWS* seems to believe, is responsible before the world for all unpleasant consequences.

In this attempted sketch of its temper and tendency we have not denied the intrinsic virtuousness of the Pro-Boer temperament. Its vice is not seeing that it is only suited for the chamber and the study, and not at all for the public life into which it has, with little difficulty, been prevented from rushing.

We believe that their persistent and faithless depreciation of our national aims, of what in our heart of hearts we mean the empire to be, their preposterous tirades upon the greed of our colonial enterprise and the inhumanity of our conduct are due (except in the case of a few contemptible fanatics) much less to any malignity than to an innate aversion to and incapacity for the real difficulties of Imperial politics.

To say that their rhetorical demands coincide largely with the ultimate ideals of humanity is only to condemn them as a political creed. Hence the bulk of their eloquence has been, we believe, rather of the self-indulgent order, and, when not irritating, futile and banal. The most useless of publicists can turn with a weary sigh from the dingy muddle of actual life to the speckless empyrean of what ought

to be, and fare like the astrologer in the fable.

The surprises, the sharp suffering, the long anxieties of the past two years have, we suspect, evolved in many minds, which had scarcely reflected on the subject before, some outline of Imperial ethics, some sort of a philosophy of national action.

As to the first, they see that, however much other races, whose genius or circumstances draw them comparatively less into the turmoil of international life, may pretend to deny the practice, there can be no progress without a certain morally courageous self-assertion, that the State, like the individual, which has no self, no ideals, standards, or principles sufficiently formulated to keep national enthusiasm alive, may as well retire quietly from the great arena. Its conduct, or inaction, may give pleasure to those political agnostics who, having eliminated the old-fashioned patriotic virtues, see in mankind only a mass of equal and colourless conflicting atoms, to those cultured Hedonists to whom only the finished work of empire-making is bearable without the dirt and clamour of the workshops; but for the gross environment of the living, breathing world, drawn ever into closer congestion by the progress of science and mutual knowledge, it will not pass.

And, as to the second point, is it not equally clear that while the unity presupposed by all national action is to the philosophic eye a figment, a convention only to be maintained at the expense of a good deal of compromise (insincerity, it may seem to the Idealist, to others perhaps, patience and self-sacrifice), yet that the maintenance of such a convention, as the framework of a growing reality, is well worth great efforts to those of the patriotic faith. Doubtless the action of such a conventional per-

sonality will at its best be even less pure, in Platonic phrase, less satisfying than the sufficiently complex action of the individual; and that hence, as Mr. Lecky has sadly reminded us, public and private morals will seldom be found to correspond with any exactness. And it might be added that public, in the sense of international, political morals, form a field of action and discussion exclusively modern in its vastness, and that hence the distinction between public and private life was never so real, though it be one of those scarcely brought into general view, as we have said, except at grave crises.

It will scarcely be disputed that we all know virtuous men and women whose influence, excellent in the latter, and perhaps specially adapted for the refinement of mankind, would in the former sphere be dangerous and pernicious. What the particular temper seems to want may be variously called strength, breadth, or an admixture of material clay. Reflections, criticisms upon it, inevitably suffer to the mere dilettante listener from the reproach of vagueness, and are lightly stigmatised as all a matter of degree. But their true drift and point, familiar enough to our private judgment of men and things which is so constantly, if unconsciously, deciding the question of degree, requires now and then to be publicly emphasised.

It may be felt rather than seen in one of those outbursts of our greatest humanist, those rugged chips from the philosophic rock whence we were hewn and the hole of the pit where we were digged.

Take but degree away, untune that string,
And, hark, what discord follows! . . .
. Right and wrong,
Between whose endless jar justice resides,

Should lose their names, and so should justice too.

This chaos, where degree is suffocate,
Follows the choking.
And this neglect of degree it is
That by a pace goes backward, with
a purpose
It hath to climb.

This last and most unpalatable truth has been abundantly illustrated by Mr. Lecky in his interesting study of the various departments of public life in which a direct pursuit of the absolutely desirable has no effect but to render impossible the attainment of the moderately good.

The Idealist, then, who cannot face the spectacle of such discord should avoid the trying arena of practical politics. If, persisting, he finds with pain that there is much good in himself somehow not directly applicable to the world's needs, he may console himself with another of the historian's reflections, that the code on which great nations act, and act with what passes for honour and success, is very different not only from his own but from that of the Sermon on the Mount. Of this sort of reference we have heard a good deal lately. Mr. Ellis, in one of his speeches, told an anecdote of two travellers, one of whom, pressed by the other for his views on the burning question of the hour, replied that he wished to be "on the side of Our Lord Jesus Christ in this matter." "Oh," said the other, "I knew you were a Pro-Boer." But we are not sure that the joke is entirely with Mr. Ellis in his emphatic reflections on the frame of mind indicated by this remark. For the attitude taken of late by many pious and well-meaning Christians of the type here indicated, has been one rather exclusive, as might be expected, of the polemic side of Christianity. "Think not that I am come

to send peace on earth ; I came not to send peace but a sword." In the rude inconsistencies of the New Testament there is perhaps a more modern actuality than in the smooth sayings of Quakerism or Peace-at-any-Price philanthropy. Perhaps, this being one of the comparatively few references of the Founder of Christianity to the effect of His teaching on the world at large, it is after all not so easy to be "on the side of Jesus Christ" in matters more complex than the loan of a cloak or a hat ; though no one could wish for a nicer phrase in which to express his views or his inability to form them.

Much the same may be said of Mr. Ellis's final summary of Radical wisdom on the present situation. We read, and we should be shocked not to read, that no enduring settlement of South Africa can be founded "on the basis of military supremacy and force," that it must rest only on "the willing assent of free men," and "the immutable principles of justice, magnanimity, and freedom." This is the sort of eloquence that can be most safely recommended as never likely to do the speaker any harm. We all live in hopes that such language will some day be applicable to us ; but meanwhile is not its philosophy precisely of that impatient order that

By a pace goes backward, with a purpose
It hath to climb ?

For when we search the pages of past history for any enduring settlement undefiled at its birth by military supremacy, for any great crisis when the willing assent of free men was at once secured by the mere display of the immutable principles of justice unsupported by what people call brute force, do we not realise how little use all this fair verbiage is to the struggling politician of the moment ? We observe, possibly with vague regret, that those angelic visitants, the immutable principles of justice, magnanimity, and freedom, select for themselves material habitations compact of gross human clay. If they are not the exclusive heritage of the most warlike races, at any rate they are seldom much to be seen or heard of except in societies well stirred, wrought, and amalgamated by fierce strife and bloodshed, where the endless jar of vigorous life has evolved some rough standard of the righteousness that is stable because it has its root in things,—“The fine flower of Right” that, to the eternal wonder of the cloistered pedant and the anæmic Manchester Schoolman, must and will grow upon “the rugged stem of Might.”

THE LAND OF THE POPPY.

III.—ITS WILD LIFE.

A FEW districts in Poppy Land lie on the borders of Nepaul with the sierras of the great Himalayan range for ever gleaming in their northern sky. In these regions there exist many hundred square miles of forest, and of scrub and grass jungle, in which some of the most remarkable and interesting forms of wild life are still able to find a haven of safety. These forests, which consist chiefly of *sāl* trees, are the property of the State, and are consequently under the control of a special department of the Government service. The *sāl* (described in botanical works as *Shorea robusta*) affords a valuable and useful timber, and consequently the forests are a source of profit to the Government. They are, as may be supposed, carefully preserved, and for this every lover of Nature in her wild phases should be grateful, since it is only in these secluded spots that it is possible to see many a rare animal and bird that would otherwise have to be contemplated as a specimen in some museum, or as a captive in the collection of a zoological society. To any one who is acquainted with wild creatures this means a great deal, for there is a wide gulf between the appearance of Nature's children when wearily measuring the limits of their prisons, and when moving with the pride and grace of conscious freedom in the leafy solitudes or grassy glades of their native haunts.

It is always twilight in the *sāl* forests. The great trees growing close together shoot straight up towards

the sun and air, and do not throw out branches till they have cleared the ground by about ten or fifteen feet. Their foliage is of a dark and sombre green, and forms a thick roof through which the rays of sunlight penetrate with difficulty, and but dimly light up the gloom in which the tall trunks stand. The bark is rough and crossed by many furrows, and is in colour a deep rich brown, which is diversified by patches of many-coloured mosses, olive, green, fawn, white, and black. Around the roots of the trees there is so thick a growth of bushes and shrubs matted together by creeping plants, that it is hard to see clearly thirty yards on either side. Along the edges of the forests are large tracts of rolling plains crossed by innumerable *nullahs* and dotted with *jhāls* or marshes. These plains are clothed with long grasses of different species, and with scrub jungle consisting generally of *khair*, a variety of acacia. The most noticeable of the grasses that clothe these plains is the *munj* or *sarpāt*. This grass grows in large tussocks, throwing its leaves six or seven feet high, while its flowering stalks spring out of these some five or six feet higher. The flowers are in panicles, and are of a silvery white colour, but when newly developed have a tinge of purple about them. As they mature and the seed ripens they become very dry and light, and are detached by the wind and blown away. In this manner the seeds are conveyed great distances, and the

munj grass spreads itself quickly over a large extent of ground.

Where the land is low-lying and marshy the *munj* grass gives way to the *narkul*, a kind of reed that grows in dense masses forming impenetrable coverts which are the home of a *fauna* peculiar to them alone.

Close to the rivers the grass jungle is often interspersed with *jháo* or tamarisk. The tamarisk resembles a cypress in the appearance of its leaves, but it assumes a clumpy bush-like form in its growth. By degrees as a river bank is approached the *jháo* grows thicker until it looks like a wall of bluish-green bushes. Here and there in the labyrinths of this jungle the ground is treacherously soft, and quakes ominously at the approach of man or beast as a warning that it is to be avoided. The green belt of the tamarisk is usually succeeded by a stretch of white sand, with a streak of blue in the middle where the river gives back the clear azure of the sky. Far beyond the water with its shimmering reflections is again a line of sombre forest, and beyond this, rise the purple masses of the Nepaul hills, while high above them gleams with a pure radiance the long line of Himalaya's snows.

Chief of all the inhabitants of the *sál* forest is the tiger. By day he rests in a dense patch of *munj* grass generally near some reedy marsh. His hiding-place is cleverly chosen, and the pathways in it are known only to himself. No living creature could approach him without some sound, and the slightest rustle is an alarm to his finely-tempered senses. His eyes are closed in sleep, but his ears stand sentinel over him. While the winter sun spreads a pleasant, if short-lived, warmth through his hiding place, he sleeps calmly, paying no heed to the clucking of the duck and teal, or the trumpet notes of the

great Sahras crane wading in the shallows of the marsh hard by. As he sleeps he dreams of the fat *chital* stag he gripped on its return from the pool in which it had quenched its thirst; or it may be that visions of the young buffalo he slew last evening on the forest's edge pass before his mind, and his sleep becomes troubled for he remembers, though dimly, that the vultures are even now helping themselves to an undue share of his game. The dream becomes so vivid that his yellow eyes open lazily; but they soon close again, and with a low, purring growl he turns to rest once more. The shadows of birds wheeling high up in the air flit past him, and the small reed-warblers soothe him with the endless monotone of their shrill piping. At last the darkness begins to gather over the jungle. The huge cranes flap slowly away, uttering hoarse cries as they go, and the air strikes chilly in forest and marsh. It is growing late, but it is not yet late enough. Another hour passes, and a faint red glow on the horizon is all that is left to tell that it has been day. A grey mist begins to creep up from the marsh, and here and there a star twinkles frostily in the sky. It is time now. The tiger awakes. Throwing off the chains of sleep with a shake of his massive head he yawns, uttering as he does so a long-drawn moan that hushes the forest into silence for a mile around him. Then his jaws close with a snap; he stands up in all his Satanic beauty, and proudly stalks forth from his lair to set him down to his evening meal if he has killed the day before; if not, he peers long and carefully from the edge of his stronghold before he takes a step into the open. He must cross a small bare patch before he can enter the forest, and moving over this as noiselessly as a ghost, he disappears in the

musky shadow of the jungle. Caution is the watchword of the forest, and careful as he has been to glide like a shadow across the open space, he has been seen, and the alarm-note of a peacock, ringing out in the silence, proclaims that the great cat is abroad.

Who can follow him in his long wanderings under the pale winter moon? Who has seen him creeping slowly from tree to tree, or flattening himself down until he is completely hidden by a tuft of grass which no sane man would think thick enough to conceal a hare? Who has watched him bound up to his terrified victim, seize it by the throat, and give it that fatal twist that is the end of the tragedy; or who has seen him turn aside and spring into the dew-laden grass, eager to hide his shame and disappointment when his stalk has not succeeded, and the dappled stag dashes away through the forest-paths making it known far and wide that danger is afoot? These tragedies of the jungle must be built up from the silent witnesses of their occurrence. To one who is skilled in the signs, the history is clear to read. In the soft mud on the margin of the pool the tiger's paws have sunk deep, and it is possible to trace the huge bound the stag made to save its life.

The approach of night does not call forth the tiger alone to roam through the forest in search of food. The panther also then awakes, and quitting his lair in the hollow *semul* tree, or in the darkest nooks of the *karaunda* bushes, proceeds to hunt the part of the forest in his beat. He does this in a systematic manner, and his progress through the forest may be traced by the frequent use he makes of his voice. He is a noisy beast, and gives vent to his feelings in a succession of coughs. The panther's cry, when heard at a little distance, may be

closely imitated by working a saw two or three times on the edge of any empty wooden box; it is a rough, grating and yet hollow sound. He does not seem to care whether his voice may frighten the game in the thickets around him, or perhaps he uses it to drive the timid deer in a particular direction. The grey monkeys, cowering on the rough branches of the ebony-tree, hear him, and shrink down on the boughs, or climb higher up chattering with fear and hate. The panther pays no heed to them. He makes his way down the forest-roads, not even glancing towards the shadowy forms of the wild pig, as they dash into the jungle giving him a wide berth. The panther is fond of pig and appreciates monkey, but now his mind is set on another object. The night is dark and stormy, such a night as would gladden the heart of a daring robber, and he is bent on reaching the cattle-pen on the edge of the forest. As he emerges from the deep shadow of the jungle he sees a row of glimmering fires not two hundred yards from the borders of his domain. Voices echo in the air, and he draws back and crouches to watch what he recognises as a camp of men,—his hated enemies, and the only ones he fears. For some moments he gazes in silent dissatisfaction at the intruders and then, rising, gives notice of his displeasure in deep grunting roars that make the white man in his tent look longingly at his gun and wish it was a moonlight night. For a long time the panther hesitates, walking to and fro, crouching and glaring at the lights, and giving way to noisy bursts of rage. More logs are thrown on the fires that blaze up brightly and the watchmen call to one another, till at last he turns sullenly back, and leaving his favourite road between Lachman Mahto's wheat-patch and the euphorbia hedge, plunges into the thickets, and

makes his way through the wet grass and thorns that lie between him and the cattle-pen. But his noisy anger has betrayed him, and the herdsmen are awake. They have reason to remember his visits, for it was only a week ago that he struck down the red calf that Gopi Ahir had just bought from the Banjara trader for four rupees. The grass crackles as he pushes his way through, and some wakeful monkeys begin to chatter their alarm. But the panther's blood is up, and he advances boldly to the thorn fence inside which the cattle are penned. The herdsmen rush up with loud yells and blazing brands, dogs bark wildly, and some bullocks, breaking loose, career madly round the enclosure. For a moment the panther's green eyes glare with demoniac rage, but a lighted brand falls on the ground unpleasantly near him sending up a shower of sparks that make him recoil a few yards. He is defeated, and with a grunt of disappointment he turns and vanishes in the vague shadow of the forest.

And now, as he walks down a by-path, he hears a goat bleating dismally in the darkness. In a few bounds he is up to it, but to his surprise it does not stir. This puzzles him, and arouses suspicions which require to be allayed before any further action can be taken. The panther sits down, and studies the goat which gazes piteously at him, straining at its rope meanwhile. In a few minutes the mystery has been worked out. This goat has evidently been left here by mistake. It is an ordinary goat tied to a peg in the ground, and a careful examination of all the surrounding bushes shows that there are no traps or snares about it. It can be approached from all sides with perfect safety. There are other arguments urging him to prompt action in the matter; the last meal dates from a long time back, and morning is not far off.

The panther is hungry, and hunger, like love, is often blind. In another moment the second scene in the tragedy is brought to a close. The panther has dislocated his victim's neck, and torn a large mouthful from its throat. With a strong jerk he breaks the cord fastening it to the peg, and drags away his booty to a quiet nook a little distance off. Here snarling and growling with pleasure he eats till morning dawns, and the thin voice of the red jungle-fowl warns all evil things to return to their hiding-places. Rising reluctantly he slowly moves off to the dense cover of a neighbouring thicket, and prepares to sleep away the tedious hours that separate him from his next meal.

In the evening he returns to finish his repast, and it is the last journey he is fated to make. High up in a tree overlooking the carcass of the goat, himself concealed in a nest cunningly wrought of leaves and twigs, sits the white man whose rest the panther disturbed last night. As the beast approaches the kill he looks round carefully, but can find nothing to arouse his suspicions. He is soon engrossed in his meal, when a slight rustle makes him raise his head. He gazes steadfastly before him, then jumps up, for his eyes have caught those of the man who sits up on the tree. The rifle rings out, and with an inarticulate groan the panther falls by the side of his last victim, writhing in the agonies of death. The rest of his history is poor and commonplace. Jackals tear the flesh of his strong muscles, and hideous vultures hold a foul feast over his bones. His skull, nicely cleaned, grins on a shelf in his destroyer's study, and his skin, well cured and mounted on red cloth, lies on the floor, and on the top of it, curled up and unconscious of the exalted position he occupies, little Tim the dachshund sleeps contentedly.

In the long grass on the outskirts of the forest a little spotted wild cat is found. It lurks in the grass, hopping to surprise a partridge or a hare, and is often driven out while beating for the latter. Its career generally comes to an abrupt end on these occasions, as the skin makes a pretty trophy, and the charge of shot intended for a partridge will be sufficient to bring it to bag. This little cat is a fierce creature, and when wounded attempts to sell its life dearly, snarling and growling with all the vicious rage of a wounded panther.

Another inhabitant of the grass on the edge of the forest, and sometimes even of the *narkul* patches, is the hyena. The hyena is a lurking coward, and as he slinks along in the shadows the meanness of his nature is well borne out by his ungainly shape. He is the analogue of the foot-pad among human beings; like him he shrinks from the light of day, and shambles along in the gloom with a shame-faced, hang-dog look about him. He peers about for some weak, defenceless creature to pull down, and if he cannot succeed in finding an animal that he is not afraid of, he solaces his gross appetite on offal. Nature has provided him with immensely powerful teeth and jaws, and he uses these chiefly to crush the bones of dead cattle upon which he often feeds. He is an unclean animal, and has the disgusting musky smell of the mongoose family. His voice is hideous to hear, and may be compared to demoniac laughter.

Another animal worthy of note for its vocal powers alone is the ubiquitous jackal, which is also, with the little grey fox, an inhabitant of the fringes of the forest. The wild outpourings of the jackal's soul nightly make these places echo with hideous sounds. The noise that one of these

small creatures can produce is appalling, and the gamut of a pack in full cry is such an extraordinary medley of groans, shrieks, and yells that a few minutes of enforced attention to it makes the listener wish for some lethal weapon to enable him to destroy the whole tribe of jackals at a blow.

The jackal is commonly believed by the natives of the country to be the forerunner of the tiger, but this belief is a somewhat fanciful one. Jackals may sometimes be forerunners of tigers, but it is not of their own will. They prowl about at dusk and at night, and when they scent or hear a tiger naturally express the alarm they feel in a long-drawn howl known as their *phedl* cry from being not unlike that word, with the *a* pronounced broad, and the accent on the last syllable. It is a cry used as a warning to other jackals to be on the alert. Jackals eat anything and everything. In the forests and jungles they prey upon small animals and birds, and close to the villages and cities they exist on offal and refuse, and rank as scavengers with the vultures. Vile as the tastes of this animal are, there are yet races of men who esteem its flesh a delicacy. The Kuch-bandwas, a wandering aboriginal race in Oudh, will readily eat jackal, as also will the Nunias, who esteem themselves higher up in the social scale than the Kuch-bandwas.

The little grey fox is found almost wherever the jackal occurs. His short, sharp bark is a pleasant sound to hear on a winter's night, and together with the shrill frequent whistle of the goggle-eyed plover is one of the established cries of the forests and plains.

Both jackals and foxes if taken young can be tamed, and are then very dog-like in their manners; but being particularly liable to rabies they do not make the best of pets.

The wolf is not uncommon in the grass and scrub jungle, but from its extreme wariness is not often seen. They are generally found in pairs, but have on occasions been seen in greater numbers. Wolves are dreaded by the defenceless villagers on account of their partiality to children, and in districts infested by them they bring sorrow and desolation to many a home. Notwithstanding this grim trait in their characters wolves when taken young become extremely tame, and even develop amusing habits. A tame wolf that came much under my observation had an especial mania for glassware. He would carry off tumblers or wine-glasses most carefully and hide them in various places in the garden without ever breaking one. His master used to play tunes on a little toy musical instrument known, I believe, as a mouth-harmonicon. This instrument Mario, the wolf, regarded with great aversion, and kept watchful eyes upon it. One day his master, having entertained some of his friends with his performances on this instrument, the party being out of doors on the beautiful lawn in his garden, inadvertently left the toy on the ground. Mario stole up with his jungle-walk noiselessly, and quietly appropriating the enemy of his peace, hid it away in a nook in the garden where it was found a month afterwards. It is not recorded whether, like the ass in La Fontaine's fable, he breathed gently into it, and exclaimed "*He, He, je joue aussi de la flûte.*"

The dense coverts of the forest as well as the *narkul* marshes and the tamarisk and grass jungles are equally the home of the wild pig. To the little village on the outskirts of the forest the sounders of pig are veritable scourges. Made cunning by experience the beast issues from his resting-place at night and trots complacently to the potato-patch, which

in a short time looks as if newly turned up with the plough for sowing. During the winter months, at which season of the year alone wheat, potatoes, and poppies can be grown, the inhabitants of these tiny pioneer villages have a weary time with their wild neighbours. They build small platforms on poles, some ten or twelve feet from the ground, and on these the watchmen spend the long hours of the night endeavouring by hoarse shouts or the occasional firing of a gun to keep off the hosts of marauders that steal up in the misty darkness.

In these regions of dense forest it is not considered unsportsman-like to shoot pigs. The spear has to be set aside, for it cannot be used. No horseman, however bold, nor any horse, however strong, could make their way at the pace required to overtake or even to keep a pig in sight, through the tussocks of the *munj* grass or the dense clumps of the tamarisk. In the forest itself a horse cannot go off the beaten track, as the under-growth is so dense that a man on foot can hardly make his way through it.

The spotted deer, or *chital* as it is called in the language of the country, loves to dwell in the deepest recesses of the forest, and it is an extremely difficult task to stalk a stag in his leafy home. Apart from the difficulty of approaching noiselessly through the thick under-growth, there is always a sentinel, generally a hind, on the watch; even when she rests she has, so to say, one eye open and nothing escapes her vigilant attention.

The *chital* is of a rich tawny brown with a darker brown stripe along the spine, and rows of white spots on the sides and flanks. The stag bears large and graceful antlers, and is one of the handsomest of the many beautiful creatures inhabiting the forest. Its colouring is wonderfully protective. In the dim light of the great

forests its dappled coat blends with the withered leaves and brown twigs in such a manner that it is only when some slight movement occurs that the animal's presence becomes evident. As evening draws on the *chital* move in silent procession through the depths of the forest to the lighter coverts on its edge, and here they wait impatiently for the night when the voices of men are hushed. In the faint starlight they step noiselessly from their hiding-places, and enter the fields of sprouting wheat that make their favourite food. If the hunter be keen he will rise in the dark, and facing the bitter cold and heavy dew of the winter morning make his way to the forest-edge and wait. As the white light of dawn begins to show itself the *chital* troop back to the cool bowers in which they mean to spend the day; and it is then that some lordly stag with towering antlers will suddenly loom out of the mist before the watcher's eyes.

Though the *chital* feeds largely on the sprouting crops he cannot be ranked as a marauder with the *nilghai*. The *nilghai*, or blue-bull, is, with the pig, held in particular detestation by the farmers. He is bold and greedy, and spares no crop, not even the poppy, full of acrid juices, which perhaps he takes as a salad with his other food. The *nilghai* is very bovine in appearance, and to this resemblance to the cow it owes its name, which is a Hindustani word, literally meaning blue-cow or blue-bull. On this account also Hindus will not kill the blue-bull, nor will any but the lowest castes partake of its flesh.

The *nilghai* prefers scrub jungle and tall grass to hide in, and generally lurks close to the field. In quiet places it may be met with at all times of the day, but where it has been harassed by sportsmen it adopts the

tactics of the *chital*, and comes forth only at night. The bull is very strongly built, and when seen among the tall stalks of the silver-flowered *moonj* is a noble animal to look at. His shoulders are very high, and a scanty mane runs down his neck with generally a long wisp over the shoulders. His horns are small and pointed, and the general colour of his body a slaty grey with a few white bars on the fetlocks. The cow is much smaller, and does not hold her head so proudly as the bull. She is of a tawny red, has large soft eyes and no horns. *Nilghais* are often seen in herds, the cows being frequently followed by one or two calves.

These animals are easily tamed when taken young, but the bull is always capricious in temper, and prone to use his sharp little horns when angry or startled. The *nilghai*, the pig, and the black buck are three animals that continue to exist in large numbers in close proximity to man, long after all other kinds of big game have been extirpated. The black buck, although not a forest animal, is to be met with wherever the tall grass thins out and leaves large bare plains in the vicinity of cultivation. They trust to their keen senses and the open nature of the ground they affect, and feed boldly in the day-time. A watchful doe is usually on the lookout, and the herd gets timely notice of the approach of any suspicious character.

The movements of the black buck are light and graceful, and when a herd is making off they often indulge in huge bounds in the air before settling down to the steady gallop which soon takes them out of sight. When moving from one pasture to another, or when issuing from the shelter of the tall grass on the way to their feeding-grounds, the bucks gener-

ally follow the does, loitering with the grand air of easy indifference after their pretty seraglios. Seen from a little distance with the sunshine gleaming upon him, a buck antelope in his winter coat looks as if clothed in black and white satin. He is a daintily finished animal, and will always remain one of the most charming figures to be met with on the wide plains of Poppy Land.

It has been already said that the undulating plains on the edges of the forests are intersected by innumerable *nullahs* draining their contents into large depressions that thus form extensive marshes. These marshes are, as a rule, almost concealed from view by the *narkul* reed which forms coverts so dense and tall that they can be explored only on the back of an elephant. Towards the centre of the marsh, where the water deepens, the *narkul* gives way and a still open lake presents itself to the view, its surface dotted with the green pads and lighted up by the white flowers of the *lotus*. In these secluded lakes, screened from view by towering walls of plumed reeds, the white-eyed duck, the wigeon, the grey duck and the common teal settle in large numbers. As the giant reeds sway and tremble before the line of slowly advancing elephants, breaking under their feet with loud crackling reports, the duck and teal rise up in large flights and wheel excitedly about their rudely invaded sanctuaries. Great bitterns flap slowly away, and blue kingfishers dart across the lagoons, while an army of water-hens, rails, and purple herons keep moving in short flights before the advancing line, and now and then a grey heron flaps heavily away to seek some quieter retreat, uttering hoarse croaks of displeasure as he goes. It is here, in the heart of these vast wildernesses of reeds, that the *gondh*, or swamp-deer, makes its home.

Naturalists call this animal *Cervus Duvauceli*, but in the regions where he is found he is known as the *gondh* or *bárasingha*. The latter name, which means twelve-horned one, has doubtless been given to him with reference to the numerous points on his spreading antlers. The brow-tines of this deer are generally very long, and almost at right angles to the beam. The beam bifurcates near the summit, and each branch bears several tines. The head when well developed has an almost palmated appearance. The *gondh* is one of the shyest of its kind, and loves to feed on the succulent grasses found in damp places. It is perhaps for these reasons that he seeks the shelter of the *narkul* reeds, for there is no sign of any special adaptation for a semi-aquatic life apparent in the structure of this deer, as in the case of the curious African swamp-antelope known as the *Sitatunga*. In appearance the *gondh* is something like a red deer. The hair round his neck is coarse and long, and forms a sort of ruff. The general colour is of a yellowish brown, with a white patch under the tail. The muzzle is elongated and narrow. The hind is smaller than the stag and hornless; she is a gentle-looking creature of a greyer tint than her mate.

In these districts, as has been said, the *gondh* can only be seen from the back of an elephant, and even then a number of those beasts are required to induce him to quit his hiding-place. As the line of elephants advances slowly and steadily the reeds ahead begin to sway and move violently as if some animal is trying to force its way out. It fights for every inch of the cover, moving now to the right now to the left. At last there is not more than a few yards of *narkul* left to hide in when the reeds suddenly part, and with a splash a noble stag emerges to view. He has had a hard

struggle to get out of the covert, and as he stands looking for a moment with wonder and alarm towards the line of elephants, his towering antlers, covered with green festoons, bear witness to the fight he has had with the thick growth of the reeds. For a moment he stands on the bank, his grand form outlined against the sky, and then, understanding that his life is at stake, the noble creature stretches forth into the gallop that frequently enables him to find another retreat in safety.

The *gondh* is one of the animals that retreat steadily before the approach of man, and as the marshy coverts it frequents are being approached steadily on all sides by cultivation, it must be placed on the long list of wild creatures that are doomed to become extinct within a measurable date.

At the corners of the *narkul* patches, where the reed gives way to grass, a curious little deer is often to be seen. This little creature is known by Europeans in India as the *para*, or hog-deer. As it bounds from its form in the dense grass it is at the first glance not unlike a pig in appearance. It always makes off at a great pace, holding its head low and its neck thrust forward, and bounds from side to side as it follows the narrow passages between the tussocks of grass. The does are of a rufous brown colour, and do not carry horns; but the stag bears a pair of light-coloured antlers, with three tines, which sometimes attain to the length of twenty inches, but are generally much less. He is a queer-looking little creature standing high in the quarters, which gives his back a humped and somewhat ungraceful shape.

Apart from the flights of duck and teal, and the swarms of bitterns, rails, purple coots, and kingfishers that find

refuge in the marshes, the most remarkable of the birds to be found in them is the *kyah* or swamp-partridge.

Though fond of low-lying damp coverts this bird does not, as its name might seem to imply, actually breed in the swamps. It is most frequently found in the short grass lying close to the *narkul* patches along the edges of the swamps, and in hollows in the tamarisk jungle where the grass is green and the soil moist. It is a large handsome bird. The male is distinguished by a bright rusty red patch on the throat, while the feathers of the breast and flanks are adorned with conspicuous white central streaks that give the plumage a singularly bright and varied appearance. The legs are red and in the male are each adorned with a long and sharp spur.

In the *munj* jungle the *francolin*, or black partridge, takes the place of the swamp-partridge. The *francolin* is fond of making excursions into the growing wheat-crops where it may often be seen feeding in unfrequented places. It also affects the sugarcane fields, and its pleasant subdued crow may be heard in many places at a considerable distance from the jungle. The male *francolin* is one of the handsomest birds of his tribe. When in full plumage the breast is deep black relieved by lunated white spots, and the face also is black relieved by a white patch under the eye; the throat has a collar of chestnut brown, and the back is a finely barred grey.

The dense coverts, so much appreciated by the *chital*, also afford shelter to the red jungle-fowl. The jungle-cock is a handsome bird, and may best be observed in the early morning on the fringes of the forest. At this time, in company with his harem, the little potentate wanders into the stubble of the freshly-cut rice-fields, and gleans a hasty meal

before the sun gets high and men begin to move about. Jungle-fowls may also often be observed feeding in the forest-paths, especially where two roads meet, and they are frequently to be met with in the neighbourhood of the *gauris*, or temporary cattle-pens in the forests, where they may be seen industriously scratching about among the refuse after the approved manner of the domestic fowl. He is a very wary bird, and is never far from a thick covert into which he runs on the slightest alarm. If completely taken by surprise he will often fly into the nearest tree, and from there make his escape into the jungle. As the cock runs through the forest the golden hackles on its neck and its bright red comb form an effective contrast to the gloomy depths it seeks. The tail is generally carried low, and the neck thrust forward as the bird makes its way through the brushwood. Early in the morning and again in the evening the jungle-cock lifts up his voice in a crow very similar to that of the domestic fowl, but feebler and less sustained. The hens are tiny brown little creatures, if possible even more wary than the cock. Walking stealthily along the edge of the forest one may sometimes surprise a family-party that has just returned from an outlying field. The sight is one of the prettiest the jungle's varied scenes afford, but it is very fleeting. The little birds become aware of one's presence as if by magic, and disappear immediately through the tawny curtain of grasses and leaves into the dark recesses of the forest.

Another noticeable inhabitant of the *sāl* forests is the *bhimraj*, or racket-tailed drongo-shrike. This bird is of

an intensely black colour shining with greenish reflections in the light. The head is crested, and the shafts of the two outermost tail feathers are prolonged far beyond the rest. They terminate in spatula-shaped webs, and from these extraordinary appendages the bird derives its name. The *bhimraj* is a noisy bird, often uttering its full-toned whistle as it flits from tree to tree. The whistle is extremely human in sound, and when heard for the first time makes one involuntarily look round for the intruder. Besides this cheery whistle, which is its habitual note, the *bhimraj* is able to produce a variety of others, for it is a clever mimic, and soon learns the cries of the birds around it. It is sometimes kept in cages, and makes an amusing pet, but it requires a constant supply of animal food, for in its wild state it lives entirely upon insects. The *bhimraj* keeps to the forests, and never approaches cultivation as does its fearless little cousin, the common drongo.

Here I must bring my notes to an end, for it is not possible in this glimpse at the life of the forest to describe the ways and manners of all its inhabitants. To one who has visited these scenes with a mind open to the fascinating influence of Nature in her wild moods, the thought of the dimly-lighted arcades of the forest, the bewildering stretches of the flowering grasses, the still reed-covered marshes, the rivers now turbid and bordered with treacherous quicksands, now flowing limpid and clear over beds of rounded pebbles, and the forms and ways of the strange creatures that people these wildernesses, will come back in after days as the recollection of a visit paid to an enchanted land.

G. A. LEVETT-YEATS.

HIS BAPTISM OF FIRE.

HE had too much imagination; not too much, perhaps, for a poet or a novelist, or a writer of travels, but decidedly too much for a British subaltern on active service; and it was that which made him so uncomfortable.

He had drifted into the army from family tradition, not from any special liking for the life, except so far as it was a lazy one. All his ancestors,—so far as his descent could be traced,—had been soldiers and he never dreamed of being the exception. He had never calculated that his animal spirits were exceptionally deficient, and that his want of interest in field-sports went far to disqualify him for the profession he had adopted. Civilisation had shielded him from all bodily dangers through his earlier years: yet he had a concealed terror of a horse's hind-legs, and a sickening dread of thunder-storms which might have told him that constitutionally he was a coward; but he never realised the fact until he knew his battalion was going into action, though he had felt qualms which he acknowledged were unworthy of a soldier from the first moment that he learned that they were destined for active service.

As the thin khaki-clad column wound slowly over the parched surface of the veldt, his unfitness for the post he occupied became very patent to him; but that thought was so far the least painful of those which possessed him that he would gladly have dwelt on it, if he had had the power; but more hideous thoughts would obtrude.

He was going to be killed; of that he had not the least doubt, and if not in this action, then in the next; but what would being killed mean? That he did not know, and there was nobody to tell him. There would be a great crash or shock, he supposed, and then—what? The end of all things? Scarcely; he felt so strongly, as every sentient being must feel, even if he never gives expression to the feeling, that he was the centre of the universe, the final end of all creation, that he could not conceive of a world from which he had been blotted out. There must be a further existence for him, but, being strictly a materialist, he could not credit the teachings of religion. What then would that further existence be? Was it possible that death destroyed not consciousness, but merely the power of expressing it, that the dead man's senses lingered in a slowly putrefying body? Pah! But it was possible,—though, if such was the case, what happened when the body was resolved into its component parts? He had only thrown the difficulty a few weeks further on. Perhaps no one ever knew that he died but merely died to others, while living on to an eternity in a self-shaped world of his own. To live in a world peopled only by phantoms seemed,—though, why he might have found it hard to explain,—a shade more terrible than to remain the paralysed tenant of a decaying carcase. Or, perhaps, the moment of death lasted for ever. The dying died to the outside world instantaneously, but the sensations of the moment of death

were printed on the individual consciousness and never passed away. That theory was, if anything, worse than the preceding ones.

Of course he had always known he was mortal, and that death must be faced sooner or later; but it had seemed so immeasurably distant a week ago and now it seemed so pressingly imminent, and he had not the faintest idea what it would be like. Every other ordeal in life can be faced with some more or less definite idea of what it would resemble drawn either from one's own experience, or from that of others; but death stood out majestically and hideously apart, though he knew its wings were already enfold-
ing him.

He would look at the matter in another light. Whether he died early or late in the action; whether he fell by the first shot fired, or escaped until the victory was won, and dropped as he cheered on the final charge, the casualty-lists would not be made up till late that night. When would they be published at home? Would it be in the morning or the evening papers? Would Flora, that inveterate early riser, discover it in the columns of *THE TIMES*, or Giles, the enthusiastic sportsman, chance upon it as he unfolded his half-penny sheet of glaring head-lines, before he had mastered the latest news from the race-course and the betting lists? Perhaps the War Office would be considerate enough to send a special message, and his father would emerge from his study with a pink sheet fluttering in his hand and launch the news with chastened pride at the unsuspecting heads of his startled family. However they got the news it would hurt them; they were all fond of him, and he was very fond of them; he did not like to be the cause of giving them pain, even

though he would never know that he had done so.

How aggressively callous and unsympathetic they were all round him! The soldiers were whistling the regimental march; his captain was smiling blandly on the company, confident that they would do credit to his training; his brother subaltern actually dropped back to offer him a cigarette. He took it, sooner than hurt the other's feelings, though profoundly conscious how incongruous cigarette-smoking was to one devoted to an early and violent death. He even lighted it, but after a very few puffs he let it out and threw it away; a chubby-faced bugler snapped it up and pocketed it, and yet the bugler was as fair a mark for an enemy's bullet as he was himself, except for some slight difference in size. However, he was going to be killed and the bugler was not.

He realised that his legs were faltering under him and that sweat was pouring down from under his helmet, though he felt anything but warm. This would never do. Surely if condemned criminals could, as he had often read, march with a firm step to the scaffold, with their own burial-service ringing in their ears, he could command himself on the way to die, conscious of no death-worthy crime, but, on the contrary, of the intention of dying for his country. Bah! Death was the all-absorbing factor in the situation; the why and the how were, or soon would be, nothing to him.

Halt! The battalion flung themselves down on the grass as if swept by the fiery sword of an avenging angel. He lay down too, though with serious doubts whether his limbs would serve him to get up again. Crash! what was that? A big gun firing ahead: the last act was beginning. At that sound every one

started up; he hoped no one noticed that he had to use his hands to rise to his feet. There was no need for the colonel to call "Step out, men, we're wanted." They were straining forward as fast as they could go; the ground was slipping back under their feet, and his own brief span of life was slipping away with it.

Crack, crack, crack! A sound as of marbles thrown out of a bag on to a stone floor, dominated by a grunting sound like a panting brazen-throated pig. "Silomio!" ejaculated his brother subaltern, who rejoiced in high-sounding and inappropriate expletives. "They've got a maxim, I suppose; at least we've taken none with us." Another crash, another rattle, each quickening their steps. An aide-de-camp came careering with studied ease of manner to meet them. "That chap's got 'ands," criticised a private who wished to be thought an authority on matters equestrian. "Never mind, Bill, you needn't fear he's come for you, if he hasn't got no tail," commented another.

The aide-de-camp's orders were concise, the colonel's action prompt: "Numbers One and Two Companies, extend." He was in Number Three, which was not to start in the fighting line. So much the worse; if he'd got to die, let him die and get it over. Ah! there was one redeeming feature about death which he had not considered; if he died,—when he had died,—he need never fear death again so long as he lived, or rather so long as his senses lasted. After all, death couldn't be so much worse than the fear of it.

"Numbers Three and Four, supports." That was the last order he should ever obey, at least from those lips; he supposed the captain would find some fiddling details to fuss about before the end, and what was the end going to be like? They were

breasting the ridge now which divided them from the battle-field; a shrapnel burst a little to the left flicking up the dust in impotent malice; a spent rifle-ball or two dropped near them thudding against the ground; the crack, crack, crack was becoming continuous, punctuated by the crashes of the field-guns and drowning the peculiarly distasteful snort of the maxim. There was a louder explosion spluttering off into the accompaniment of rifle-fire. "B. Company, sir," commented his sergeant; "their volleys always was ragged."

They had cleared the ridge now and the rifle-bullets began chipping up the dust round them, and screeching past with a very blood-thirsty note in their flight. "First blood to Private Games," cried the owner of that name throwing up his left arm where just below the elbow a dark red stain was showing on his khaki sleeve. Now it might come any moment, and the sooner the better. One of the fighting line was sitting on the ground, with an expression of displeased astonishment on his face, knotting a grimy handkerchief round the fleshy part of his thigh. People seemed to be getting wounded rather than killed, but this only deepened the horror of it. If wounded, you probably died just the same, after lying for four and twenty hours, or perhaps more, in hideous agony.

"Halt!" They pulled up among a convenient collection of ant-heaps, each high enough to shelter its couple of men. A long-tongued *aard-vark* who had broken down the side of one of them and was making a placid meal off thousands of its inhabitants, withdrew a glutinous tongue and scuttled away just escaping a playful stroke from the butt of a Lee-Metford. They snuggled under cover. "Blaze away, you beggars, we can stay here for a fortnight!" cried

one of the rear-rank men. A well-aimed shrapnel wrecked one of the ant-heaps and the indwellers swarmed out to take summary vengeance on the nearest soldiers. "Damned big fleas!" cried one of the assailed recoiling. It was curious; every one else seemed as unconcerned as possible; he, only he, felt a deadly sickness and a paralysis of every muscle. "Gawd!" cried a man in front of him and dropped. It was Jenkins, the crack bowler of the regimental eleven. "They must have put a break on that ball to reach you, Tom," said his rear-rank man callously. The captain passed slowly along the rear of the line smoking a briar-root pipe, unconcernedly.

"I wish to goodness I could see what was going on," he remarked to his subaltern. This latter made no rejoinder, but by a great effort forced his lips to frame the question which was superseding the fear of death in his mind: "Captain, do I look as if I was afraid?"

"Since you ask me, you do uncommonly; but I don't see any help for it. We're in for it now, but for the Lord's sake pull yourself together. Your face is enough to scare the company out of action."

Well, if the worst was true, he must put an end to it. He made no answer but ran to the tallest ant-heap, at his utmost speed to reach it before his resolution failed. "Give me a leg up, one of you," he cried to the two men beside it. "What, sir?" they rejoined simultaneously. "Give me a leg up," he repeated with the fretful petulance of an invalid. "Isn't that plain English?" It's plain suicide, sir," said one of the men doubtfully. The subaltern made a desperate spring upward, gripped the top of the heap and swung himself aloft with all the agility he could

muster; the men seeing him resolute gave him a jerk under each foot with such determined good-will that they nearly propelled him over the domed top and down the other side.

"Come down, you young fool!" It was his captain who was speaking.

He could not trust his voice to reply, so with trembling hands he undid the case of his field-glasses, took out his binoculars and adjusted them.

The captain said no more,—perhaps he understood and respected his junior's motives,—he only addressed himself to the men. "Come away from there, you two; he'll draw their fire."

"Just as we was so comf'able too," grumbled one of the couple.

Luckily for his future ease of mind neither of them was hit in changing cover. There he sat, resigned to a panic terror which soon yielded to a vague impersonal curiosity; he could see the fighting line halted under similar cover two hundred yards ahead, the guns booming away doggedly on his right rear and on the left some barely perceptible movements which told of a wide turning operation in progress. At length he found himself looking on so unconcernedly that the thought suggested itself, had he really been killed and was his disembodied spirit watching the progress of the fight? If so, death was not unpleasant; but the objection offered itself that, so far as he knew, men did not take field-glasses and Sam Browne belts into a future life.

"Damn your silly eyes!" It was his own voice grown quite clear and resonant, addressing the remark to the invisible force which had jerked his left arm and made him drop his binoculars, drenching his sleeve at the same time with warm water or some similar liquid. The glasses rolled to

the foot of the ant-heap: curse the silly things, he didn't want them. What an infernal mist there was rising! It would spoil the fight. Was he going to be sick and, if so, why? He thought he had put on khaki this morning but his left sleeve was a dirty red. The chubby-faced bugler suddenly appeared before him holding out the glasses he had dropped. Now, that boy would get shot,—surely he had more sense than to prance about in front of the cover like this,—sure enough the boy had got shot,—at least there was a curious round blob of blood on his face. "You're dripping on to me, sir," said the bugler. Apparently he had been shot himself: he pulled out his handkerchief to tie round the wound wherever it was when, suddenly, there was an almighty concussion and he was sitting on the ground at the foot of the ant-heap with the bugler gazing at him with tender solicitude. "Let me tie it up for you, sir," he said.

"Go away, go away, don't get shot; there must be somebody to blow the advance;" but by this time the linen was roughly knotted round his wounded arm and he felt better.

"And there is, sir!" At that moment the advance rang out and the bugler, raising his instrument to his lips, repeated it with a blast which drowned even the distant crash of the cannon. The wounded subaltern jumped off the ground as lightly as a stag. "Steady, boys," cried the captain, "don't rush it, keep your wind!" What infernal silly rot! Let them get at the beggars as quickly as possible and give them what for. Forwards they pressed, the bullets whistling, shrieking, and hopping round them. What asses the enemy were to waste so many cartridges when they were none of them doing any damage! Forward! they were up with the fighting line now,—up

jumped the latter with smoking rifles, and came forward with their comrades. One or two did not rise; why was that? Still there was no time to bother about them. "Fix bayonets!" the little dagger-blades clicked home on the Lee-Metfords; the bullets whistled and shrieked—they hopped no longer—only thudded now and then with a dull, ghastly satisfaction. "Charge!"—life was worth living now, if death came the next moment—how they tore over the ground, and cheered and yelled and shouted!

One man stumbled on an inequality of ground and brought half-a-dozen others on the top of him, but the heap was left behind and the bottom man's requests for "a little bit off the top" grew fainter and fainter; others dropped and lay quiet. Crash! bang! What had happened? An invisible wire fence had intervened and thirty or forty of the leaders stood for one moment on their heads with their legs wildly waving in the air, but they overbalanced on the right side of the fence, picked themselves up and ran on. "Mazawattee, but it's ripping!" gasped a voice at his elbow; it was his brother subaltern bare-headed, breathless, open-mouthed. Crack! A rifle was loosed off almost in his face and as the grains of powder flicked on to his cheek he saw one of the enemy two yards ahead. He jabbed his sword into him somewhere viciously before he could draw trigger again, and rolled spent and panting against a still-smoking machine-gun. They were there!

Somebody was shouting "Halt!" so he shouted it too, and the wild uproarious men in khaki pulled up not altogether willingly, breathless as they were. He looked at his sword and saw it stained as red as his left sleeve; recollecting the thrust, he went back to investigate its result.

He found a bearded man lying on his back with his teeth clenched and one hand convulsively clutching his side. Seeing the soldier approach the other hand stole towards the rifle he had dropped. "No, you don't!" exclaimed the all-pervading bugler who came up on the other side just in time to drop his foot upon the Mauser. "Say the word, sir, and I'll cut his dirty throat with my band-sword." "Don't be a murderous little ruffian," said the officer, unslinging his water-bottle. "I'm awfully sorry," he went on to the wounded man; "it was a beastly low trick to spike you like that, when you'd got nothing to proggle back with." The other looked at him, uncomprehending, but the proffered water-bottle he seized and eagerly drank from.

"I shall take his blooming rifle," said the unabashed bugler; "'taint good enough to leave a wasp his sting."

A calm, business-like man in plain clothes strolled up with a curious black box in his hand; he was the war-correspondent of an illustrated paper. "Jolly good charge," he commented. "I hope you don't claim any copyright in your face, sir; I've got some ripping good snap-shots of you."

"As how?"

"On the ant-heap over there, picking up your field-glasses, and now giving water to the wounded. If that doesn't fetch the British public, I don't know what will."

"Print 'em, by all means,—oh Jerusalem!"

"What is the matter?"

"Tin-tacks in my back, I should think by the feel."

"Rather, some of these," and the

correspondent snapped a big ant off the other's sun-burned neck. "Thump him, boy," he said to the bugler, "thump him hard and all over!" The boy demurring at so assaulting his superior officer, the correspondent took the job in hand and performed it with such zeal that the subaltern was soon begging him to stop.

"Do you think those snap-shots will come out all right?" he asked.

"I hope so; if they do, I shall publish them."

"Do; if only Gwyneth could see them."

"Who?"

"Gwyneth," he repeated with a frankness which anywhere but on the field of battle would have been foreign to his nature; "the girl I was in love with. She wouldn't have me, preferred some one else. Rather bad taste, wasn't it? Now she'll be sorry." Then recollecting himself, he went on: "No, she'd better not see them; it would only be making her sorry under false pretences, for I hope the snap-shots won't show what a thundering funk I was in all the time."

The victorious force was marched home through the sudden darkness of a South African evening. "Why are you so silent?" asked his captain.

"I was wondering whether it wouldn't be as well to serve out a few ants to the men before battle; down their collars, you know, in case any of them felt at all af,—I mean nervous. Because it must have been the ants biting me which made me forget how scared I was."

"I don't think you needed the application, my boy," said the captain, laying his hand on the other's shoulder very tenderly.

STUDIES IN SHAKESPEARE'S HISTORY.

V.—KING JOHN.

THE time of the early Plantagenet kings is pre-eminently an age of great personalities, of makers of history, founders of nations and institutions. Their number is out of proportion to the time they occupy; they jostle each other upon the stage of history as they did in their lives, and we can neither wonder that Richard the First and John were out-witted by Philip Augustus and Innocent the Third, nor that to those who think of this age as the time of Henry the Second, of Innocent, and of Frederick the First and Second, the sons of Henry seem weak men, incompetent, and unworthy of much consideration. And yet this verdict is by no means just. Their reputation is dimmed by their father's splendour, and by the nobler character or greater success of some of their contemporaries. But there can be little doubt that in any other age Richard would have been reckoned a great general and a skilful diplomatist as well as a brave soldier; and the sagacity of John's political combinations would be more generally recognised had he not been out-witted by those who were even more sagacious than himself.

He has, indeed, been described by one historian as "the ablest and most ruthless of the Angevins," and, though the first epithet is a palpable exaggeration, it comes nearer to the truth than the righteous contempt of those who have denied him intellectual merit because he happened to be singularly lacking in moral virtue.

His skill in politics would perhaps be more naturally described as craft than wisdom; but is not consummate craft a mode of wisdom? And consummate his craft certainly was. The complete hypocrisy with which he veiled his treachery to his father till, having won his confidence, he turned upon him and added all that was necessary to produce the tragedy of Henry's dying defeat, was but the characteristic beginning of a career in which, morally contemptible as it was, we cannot but admire the tireless energy, the intellectual alertness, the adroit self-helpfulness. He made many mistakes; it was as much his fault as his misfortune that he lost the great Angevin empire as rapidly as he did, that he had to make a humiliating submission to the Papacy, that he wearied half his subjects into treason by his tyranny, and that he was compelled to sign a bargain with them which no medieval king would ever have dreamed of keeping. But all this does not prove him a fool,—unless it must be said that excessive craft becomes folly, because the political juggler, concerned ever with airy tricks, forgets that there is hard ground beneath him on which he may fall.

Wise man or fool, such a character is necessarily of considerable psychological interest and, at first sight, admirably fitted to be the hero in a play written by one who was a great thinker as well as a great dramatist. But a closer study of the man shows pretty clearly that, interesting as his

character is from what may almost be called a scientific point of view, he was very little suited to become the hero of a play, nor was his life particularly adapted for dramatic presentment. For though John is a striking figure in history, it is only occasionally that he is an interesting one; his wickedness does not arouse our hatred, nor his fate our pity, while his ingenuity calls forth a cold admiration quite untouched by emotion. There is but little human interest in his life; he knows neither real love nor true friendship; his ambition is merely negative, a dogged determination not to be beaten. And thus he is something alien, something rather remote, less human than Milton's Satan because without his eloquence; and it is chiefly for this reason, I suppose, that Shakespeare's KING JOHN is among the least admirable of his plays, being both unconvincing and undramatic. One feels in reading the play, and even when seeing it acted, as if the dramatist had striven vainly to make dry bones live, to make the historical King John a real and living figure, and to energise the old drama upon which his play is founded. But the material he had to deal with baffled even his genius, and King John remains a lay-figure in all but a few passages; he is indeed the protagonist only in name, Faulconbridge being the chief speaker and the characteristic channel of Shakespeare's philosophy.

The play is based on two motives; the most prominent, of which Faulconbridge is the principal exponent, being the virtue of patriotism. The Bastard is typical of that somewhat aggressive loyalty so inherent in the Elizabethans during and after the long struggle with Spain.

This England never did, nor never shall,
Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,

But when it first did help to wound itself.

And his patriotism is even more violent earlier in the play when, in braving the Dauphin, he allows his imagination to get the better of him and describes his master, the loser of Normandy, John Sansterre, as

That hand which had the strength,
even at your door,
To cudgel you and make you take the hatch,
To dive like buckets in concealed wells,
To crouch in litter of your stable planks,
To lie like pawns lock'd up in chests and trunks,
To hug with swine, to seek sweet safety out
In vaults and prisons, and to thrill and shake
Even at the crying of your nation's crow,
Thinking his voice an armed English-man.

One is reminded of Henry the Fifth and his

I thought upon one pair of English legs
Did march three Frenchmen.

But the utterance of that strong national sentiment common in most of Shakespeare's historical plays is not confined to the Bastard alone. King John himself, before he has been forced to his knees, expresses the anti-papal feeling of Shakespeare's time when he refuses to accept Stephen Langton as Archbishop of Canterbury. His language calls to mind both the statutes of Henry the Eighth and the theories of the Stewarts.

What earthly name to interrogatories
Can task the free breath of a sacred king?
Thou canst not, cardinal, devise a name
So slight, unworthy and ridiculous,
To charge me to an answer, as the pope.
Tell him this tale; and from the mouth
of England

Add thus much more, that no Italian
 priest
 Shall tithe or toll in our dominions;
 But as we, under heaven, are supreme
 head,
 So under Him that great supremacy,
 Where we do reign, we will alone up-
 hold,
 Without the assistance of a mortal
 hand:
 So tell the pope, all reverence set apart
 To him and his usurp'd authority.

But the secondary motive, the study of the character of the King himself, is far more interesting, even if, from a dramatic point of view, it is unsatisfactorily developed. Of course, in order to bring the action of his play within a moderate limit of time, Shakespeare began his story of King John when he was grown up and his character fixed, and, even so, has crowded the events of years into a few months. Had the dramatic presentment been possible, how interesting would it have been to know Shakespeare's conception of John in his youth! What were the qualities which made him his father's favourite son? What started him on the course which led him to a cynical treachery to his father, his brother, and his subjects? These and other questions might Shakespeare have solved for us, had he chosen to go back beyond the old play upon which he based his work. The youth of John might have been as interesting as that of Henry the Fifth. But, even within the limits which he took for his play, Shakespeare seems to have found the material so difficult to deal with that we can well believe he regarded a trilogy like the two parts of *HENRY THE FOURTH* and *HENRY THE FIFTH* as impossible.

John's seizure of the crown can hardly be described as a usurpation. He had already been the virtual ruler during a great part of his brother's reign, and, in the days before the

law of hereditary succession was definitely settled, it was but natural that he should reign as being more suited to the difficult position of a medieval king than a boy of twelve. It is improbable that Philip Augustus ever seriously intended to maintain Arthur's claim; out of his persistent enmity to the house of Anjou he came forward as his champion in order to embarrass John upon his accession, and get whatever he could for himself of the territories which he seized in Arthur's behalf. The marriage of his son Louis with John's niece Blanche and the lands ceded by John on that occasion bought off his hostility for the present, and he could afford to wait for a pretext for further aggression.

Nor was it long before his opportunity came. The murder of Arthur was an absurd blunder. Political necessity does not excuse the temerity of such crimes as John's murder of Arthur and Richard the Third's murder of his nephews. Dangerous as the victims were in each case when living, they were doubly dangerous dead, giving the enemies of the murderers the very weapon they needed, the means of stirring up public opinion against them. The usurpation of Richard the Third offended few till the murder of those whom he had displaced roused the disgust even of men accustomed to his methods and experienced in the savagery of civil war. The doubtfulness of John's title was of little account in most of his French dominions, and of none at all in England, until the disappearance of Arthur enabled Philip, in league with John's discontented subjects, to glorify selfish designs with moral indignation. Here, as at other times, John failed because his cruelty made him forget his customary prudence. Or was it perhaps not so much cruelty as a note

of impulsiveness, of impatience in his temperament which hurried him, unwilling to wait, out of the sly caution which is commonly regarded as the ground-work of his character? The murder of Arthur is an act of the same type as the divorce of his first wife and the marriage of his second, a double imprudence by which he offended the powerful house of Gloucester in England and the great Count de la Marche, whose affianced bride he carried off, in Aquitaine. It corresponds exactly with his folly in braving the Pope and rejecting the excellent opportunity for a dignified compromise which Innocent's appointment of Stephen Langton gave him. It is precisely what we should expect of the man whose savage anger at his defeat would not allow him, hypocrite as he was, to pretend, even for a short time, to abide by the Great Charter, but drove him to an immediate defiance of the barons, when a brief period of pretended submission might, with the Pope's aid, have given him the victory. He had his father's craft, while lacking his patience, and his brother's passionate nature without his moments of magnanimity.

The tragedy of the rapid disappearance of the Angevin empire seems hardly to have been appreciated by Shakespeare; its loss he regards merely as a testimony to John's incapacity. His indifference is probably due to the fact that it was a purely dynastic, not a national possession and of little interest to the English people. But, further, it is perhaps not too fanciful to suppose that, like most of our historians, he regarded its loss as a national advantage. The severing of the direct connection of England with the Continent is in any case mainly responsible for what is called the insularity of the English character; and we may note that in the reign succeeding this

the dislike for foreigners was particularly pronounced, exactly as it was in the reign of Elizabeth, when Mary's death without children had just saved England from becoming a province of the Spanish empire. They were the same feelings which prompted the dislike of Richard of Cornwall's election to the Empire, or that of Henry the Third's son Edmund to the throne of Sicily, and which led Englishmen almost to applaud Elizabeth's unprincipled treatment of her allies and of her many intended husbands. Patriotism must perhaps necessarily be somewhat narrow-minded in order to be effective.

But, to return to John, the murder of Arthur is the chief point on which Shakespeare's slight sketch of his character rests. We see little of the real man in the war and reconciliation with Philip; that is but an instance of the universal sway of

That smooth-faced gentleman, tickling
Commodity.

But it is when, in his desire for murder and yet fear to order it (for he already shirks the responsibility), he conveys his wish to Hubert de Burgh in a web of hints and flatteries, talking to drown his own conscience, silencing his horrid fear with words, that we begin to understand Shakespeare's conception of him, the meanness, the cowardice, and the self-consciousness which would make of his own thoughts an audience to be conciliated.

I had a thing to say.

But I will fit it with some better time.

And then notice the curious nervousness which makes him break off and feign, with the most feebly transparent pretence of emotion, to be almost overcome by his friendship for Hubert.

By heaven, Hubert, I am almost
ashamed
To say what good respect I have of
thee.

I had a thing to say, but let it go :
The sun is in the heaven, and the proud
day,
Attended with the pleasures of the
world,
Is all too wanton and too full of gawds
To give me audience : if the midnight
bell
Did, with his iron tongue and brazen
mouth,
Sound on into the drowsy race of night ;
Or if that thou couldst see me without
eyes,
Hear me without thine ears, and make
reply
Without a tongue, using conceit alone,
Without eyes, ears and harmful sound
of words ;
Then, in despite of brooded watchful
day,
I would into thy bosom pour my
thoughts :
But, ah, I will not ! yet I love thee
well ;
And, by my troth, I think thou lovest
me well.

Thus he reveals his desire in riddles, and yet in the end is forced to be explicit and utter those words his tongue will scarcely form, "Death, a grave."

Shakespeare has taken no greater liberty with history in this play, notorious for its inaccuracies, than in the part which he assigns to Hubert de Burgh, a great baron and a man of noble character, who it is absurd to think could ever have been appointed gaoler and murderer. The scene in which he attempts to blind Arthur is without any historical foundation ; some of us may also perhaps consider it a piece of unattractive melodrama unworthy of Shakespeare. But, keeping to Shakespeare's story, although Hubert does not murder Arthur, he is forced to pretend to have done so for fear of the King's wrath, and the poet makes most excellent use of

John's reception of the news for the further portrayal of his character. The Earls of Salisbury and Pembroke, suspecting foul play, are begging for Arthur's liberation when Hubert enters to announce his death. The King speaks with philosophical resignation :

We cannot hold mortality's strong
hand :
Good lords, although my will to give is
living,
The suit which you demand is gone
and dead :
He tells us Arthur is deceased to-night.

But soon, seeing their indignation and in fear of the consequences, he begins to repent :

There is no sure foundation set on
blood,
No certain life achieved by others'
death.

And when he hears first of the French invasion, then of the death of his mother the great Queen Eleanor, the good or evil genius of the Angevin house, the woman whose wit could ruin or preserve husband or sons according as she pleased ; and, lastly, when he is told of the popular discontent and the horror upon the land, he turns upon Hubert in his fear and despair, denying his commission for the murder, and, with the weak ingenuity of a coward, trying to shift the responsibility to his agent. Remembering, perhaps, the murder of Becket he cries :

It is the curse of kings to be attended
By slaves that take their humours for
a warrant
To break within the bloody house of
life,

Hadst thou but shook thy head or made
a pause
When I spake darkly what I purposed,
Or turn'd an eye of doubt upon my face,
As bid me tell my tale in express words,

Deep shame had struck me dumb, made
me break off,
And those thy fears might have wrought
fears in me:
But thou didst understand me by my
signs
And didst in signs again parley with
sin;
Yea, without stop, didst let thy heart
consent,
And consequently thy rude hand to
act
The deed, which both our tongues held
vile to name.

The tragic episode is complete here, the real inner tragedy of John's life. It matters little now if Arthur be alive or dead, though the news that he yet lives at once restores Hubert to favour. It matters little if John succeed or fail. For morally his failure is now achieved. Hitherto he has been a villain certainly, but he has not lacked a certain grand consistency in his wickedness together with traces of intellectual power. But now in the revelation of his feebleness, of his absolute inability to abide by the result of his actions, John ceases to be in any sense respectable. The attitude in which Shakespeare draws him here tallies with his abject submission to the Pope after defying him for years; neither his submission in the one instance nor his repentance in the other would make him contemptible, were it not for the violence which came first. Audacity can scarcely be reckoned a virtue, but persistent courage even in crime ennobles what it cannot excuse.

But the visible tragedy of his life and its ending were terrible enough. His reconciliation with Rome, though winning him a powerful ally against Philip and saving him for the moment from invasion, seems really to have lost him the respect of many of his subjects who preferred an excommunicate to a vassal king. The barons moreover could neither understand

nor sympathise with his diplomacy. Scarcely less selfish, probably, than John himself they took but little interest either in the chronic struggle with France or in the preservation of the continental possessions of the Angevin House. To them the King's nominal vassalage to the Papacy meant humiliation, and the campaign of 1214 merely a foreign war which did not concern the English and the Anglo-Norman barons. To John the name of vassal implied little, for he had no intention of ever allowing it to be more than a name; whereas to detach Innocent from Philip's interests was for him an invaluable gain, enabling him, with the Pope's connivance, to concentrate his energies on that league of Philip's enemies, which was to win back for him all that he had lost. The complicated negotiations and intrigues, by means of which he formed his great alliance with the Count of Flanders and the Emperor Otto on the one hand and the barons of Poitou on the other, were conducted with masterly skill at the very time when he was hard pressed by the barons at home. If diplomacy alone could win battles, John would have established a great reputation at Bouvines. The patriotic resistance of the French nation and their loyal support of a king so unlovable as Philip Augustus was a thing which John could hardly have been expected to foresee. And so by that one defeat all his hopes were dashed, his schemes wasted, his dream of crushing his rebellious barons, through the added prestige of a great victory over the foe who encouraged them, for ever dissipated.

It has been said that the French victory at Bouvines won the Great Charter for England, and certainly, if John had been victorious, he might have indefinitely postponed his defeat at the hands of his barons. The con-

stitutional importance of that event is not a matter for discussion here, but John's conduct is admirably illustrative of his character and methods, of his shiftiness, his patience, and his obstinacy on the one hand, and on the other of his tendency to lose his balance, fail to grasp the situation, and suddenly collapse.

The victory of the barons was to all outward appearance complete; and yet their position was by no means so secure as it seemed. The King still had powerful friends, he had energy, ability, and his royal rights; moreover factions soon began to appear among the baronial party, the Northern lords, who had begun the resistance to the King, quarrelling with the constitutional party, who were led by the archbishop, while some desired to invite the invasion of the Dauphin long before the King's conduct had convinced the party as a whole of the necessity of this step. But John seems to have been unable to command hypocrisy at the proper moment; the older he grew, the more impossible did a lengthened pretence of virtue become to him. Had he but simulated for a year or two an honourable desire to abide by his promise, he might have easily outwitted the barons by playing off the various factions among them against each other with more success than Charles the First in somewhat similar circumstances enjoyed, inasmuch as the conditions were more favourable and he was a cleverer man than Charles. But his open defiance of his conquerors only a few weeks after he had signed the charter, and his shameless appeal to the Pope to absolve him from his oath, showed them clearly that it was impossible to trust him. Thus upon his moral and intellectual failure as a man was piled his political failure as a king. Well might he exclaim, as at an earlier crisis in his career:

My nobles leave me; and my state is
braved,
Even at my gates, with ranks of foreign
powers:
Nay, in the body of this fleshly land,
This kingdom, this confine of blood and
breath,
Hostility and civil tumult reigns
Between my conscience and my cousin's
death.

And yet he had one more chance,—indeed one of the most remarkable things about his life is the number of chances he had. In this last campaign against Louis, just after his fortune looked gloomiest, it suddenly appeared as if there were yet a possibility for him to recover his position. The factions among the barons were growing more and more pronounced; it was becoming more and more apparent that they were no more capable of good government than he was; and then they themselves discovered, as Shakespeare, no doubt correctly, tells us, that Louis had no intention of keeping his promises to them. But at this point John's own magnificent physical strength gave way. As he was crossing the Wash, his baggage-train was overtaken by the tide and, together with his jewels, was completely lost. Then, whether through mortification, gluttony, or poison, the King was seized with a sudden illness and died in a few days; and thus the last of his many opportunities was, though this time not by his own fault, wasted also.

His death was terrible. He had failed in his own objects, and he had injured his country continuously for seventeen years. The tradition of the horror of his death is said to have lasted for many generations, growing more awful doubtless with the years, like the deaths of those who had offended the Church so deeply that the avenging devils were permitted to invade the last moments of their lives. But Shakespeare has softened

the grimness of the end by transferring it from Newark to the orchard of Swinstead Abbey, which, as a matter of fact, John left a day or two before his death, and in his story the King is forced to seek a place to die in from the hospitality of the class which he had most oppressed.

It is a very fine scene in which John takes his departure from a world most justly weary of him, standing, together with the scene of the subornation of Hubert for Arthur's murder and that in which the King reviles him for carrying out his desire, far above the level of the rest of the play. In his last moments John acquires that eloquence which Walter Pater noted as "a gracious prerogative" common to Shakespeare's English kings, but a bitter, ineffective eloquence, characteristic of one who had striven alone for no noble end and had failed. There is a certain tremendous force about him, a huge vitality which prolongs the last struggle, forbidding him to die at peace within the walls of any house. Carried out into the orchard he cries :

Ay, marry, now my soul hath elbow-room;
It would not out at windows nor at doors.
There is so hot a summer in my bosom,
That all my bowels crumble up to dust:
I am a scribbled form, drawn with a pen
Upon a parchment, and against this fire
Do I shrink up.

It is impossible to imagine a more terribly graphic description of a fever at its height; and then at Prince Henry's somewhat inapposite question, "How fares your majesty?", he again bursts forth :

Poison'd,—ill fare—dead, forsook, cast off:
And none of you will bid the winter come

To thrust his icy fingers in my maw,
Nor let my kingdom's rivers take their course
Through my burn'd bosom, nor entreat the north
To make his bleak winds kiss my parched lips
And comfort me with cold.

The arrival of the Bastard, his one true friend in the play, suggests another metaphor to him :

O cousin, thou art come to set mine eye:
The tackle of my heart is crack'd and burn'd,
And all the shrouds wherewith my life should sail
Are turned to one thread, one little hair:
My heart hath one poor string to stay it by,
Which holds but till thy news be uttered;
And then all this thou seest is but a clod
And module of confounded royalty.

And then, even as he listens to his friend's bad news, this last cord snaps and the King dies.

While far from standing in the front rank of the historical plays, KING JOHN is interesting from its suggestiveness. Shakespeare's sketch of John's life is in reality of the slightest, but it tempts to endless speculations as to his real character and motives, and the reasons for the completeness of his failure. Such speculations I have already indulged in at sufficient length and recapitulation is unnecessary. I would, however, suggest that the explanation of his curiously disappointing failures and his ultimate ruin lies in the fact that he was after all an incomplete hypocrite. He could plot, deceive, and beguile with the utmost subtlety; he could manufacture complicated schemes for out-witting his enemies with complete patience,—in fact in action his ingenuity was consummate.

But of a merely passive hypocrisy he was incapable; his natural impatience had to find a vent in plots and deep designs; when his mind was not so occupied, he was unable to conceal his real nature.

I said in a former paper that the Elizabethan dramatists were frequently fascinated by the study of evil characters, and that in their plays such characters are apt to assume an excessive importance, excessive because absolute wickedness is neither very interesting nor, perhaps, possible. As examples of this ten-

dency I instanced *TITUS ANDRONICUS* and *RICHARD THE THIRD*, and to them *KING JOHN* may, I think, be added. Both John and Richard were, to quote Pater again, "spoiled by something of criminal madness." Richard destroyed himself by piling crime on crime with the fury of a madman; while John, when he might have escaped the reward of his deeds, would not earn impunity by a timely hypocrisy and a patient pretence of virtue.

J. L. ETTY.

PARLIAMENT AND THE PARTY-SYSTEM.

THE most of this paper had been written before I read Mr. Langdon Davies's views on the same subject in the last number of this magazine. I beg to thank that gentleman most cordially for his interesting account of the rise, nature, and effects of the Party-system; but I must none the less own that he has not succeeded in converting me to his estimate of the value of that system, particularly in its bearing on Parliament. My conviction is that the influence of the Party-system is deleterious as regards the Legislature, the two political parties and their policies, and also as regards the larger interests of the nation; while Mr. Davies appears to think that it is something sacred and eternal, since he affirms it to be "wild and absurd" to foretell its decay, holds that it is essential to our Constitution, and declares it inconceivable that it can ever be eliminated from our Government. Yet he admits that England knew not the Party-system in even its crude form till nearly 1700, and that in its present form she did not know it till 1830. Well, some of us think that England was great, and did great things, even before 1700, and that the year 1830, instead of heralding the dawn of a brighter era, rather marked the beginning of our political decadence.

On Mr. Davies's main contention, that under our present Party-system the Legislature is in "almost exact harmony with the nation as a whole," and that as the Constitution becomes still further democratised, and the Party-system in consequence more strongly entrenched, the more com-

plete will become the harmony of the Constitution, I must take leave to join issue with him directly. I maintain that the introduction of democracy has deranged and disturbed the harmony of the Constitution, both by giving undue predominance to the popular branch of the Legislature, and by leaving whole classes without true representation. Surely no publicist can be deaf to the despairing cries of Irish loyalists and land-owners (to take only one class), who have been betrayed and despoiled by each party in turn, and always to serve party-interests. Capitalists, employers, British land-owners and the clergy, who have been harassed and wronged by Employers' Liability Acts, Death Duties Acts, and so forth, fiercely join in the chorus of dissatisfaction and resentment. Surely a strange harmony, this! No, indeed it is not harmony that democracy has brought us, but friction. Class is set against class; the poor are stirred up to envy the rich, and, as a natural consequence, the rich are becoming indifferent as regards the poor. While the suffrage is extended downward, immense interests, both intellectual and material, find it almost impossible to get a hearing, or even a standing, to say nothing of adequate representation. The labouring classes are indeed in a measure satisfied,—as they well may be, seeing that everybody and everything else are sacrificed to propitiate them. But the labouring classes are not the nation, though they are often assumed to be; other classes also exist, and have the right to be considered.

Mr. Davies asserts that two main

parties are essential "if indeed harmony and continuity of policy are to be desired." There is much virtue in an *if*; and, plainly, such policy as we have had for a quarter of a century past is not to be desired, and therefore the sooner its continuity is broken and its harmony destroyed the better for the nation as a whole.

Lamentations on the degeneration of Parliament are becoming unpleasantly frequent. No doubt these are due in part to what may be called the imitative and fashionable pessimism of the hour, and also in part to the desire of the halfpenny journals to provide their readers with some new sensation at all costs. But, due allowance being made for these ephemeral elements, there still remains a substratum of solid truth in the complaint that Parliament is neither what it was nor what it ought to be. We are often told that Parliamentary institutions are on their trial. They are, but that is not the worst of it; a more serious fact is that sober-minded and earnest men are beginning to fear that these institutions will fail under the test, and that they will emerge from the ordeal so discredited as no longer to command the respect of the best elements in the community. If that day ever arrives Parliamentary institutions may have to be thrown into the melting-pot, and what would be put into their place it passes the wit of man to say. To keep them out of the melting-pot by timely and judicious reform is the interest of all concerned. Nobody but a few fanatics would wish to break up the machinery, but there are very many who wish to see the machinery improved and perfected, that it may run more swiftly and smoothly, and produce larger and more permanent results. Not the abolition of Parliament but its re-

generation is what is needed. The nation requires a Simon de Montfort to take this matter in hand rather than a Cromwell. If the reformer does not renovate, the revolutionist will destroy.

What is clear to the plain man is that some subtle disease has got into the blood of Parliament and is sapping its very life. All the limbs and organs are there, and all perform their functions after a fashion, though but spasmodically; the movements are not the natural motions of a healthy organism, but the artificial jerks of a body which is without a full and vigorous life, and which is only now and then electrified into a semblance of vitality. Is the disease chronic, or merely acute? Is it a passing phase, or a normal condition? Is it due to causes which are accidental and transient, or to causes which in a democracy are essential, which are inherent in the nature of democracy itself, and which must therefore be permanent? If the latter be the true view then the matter is a serious one for those who believe that our Parliamentary institutions are essential to the welfare of the nation.

I believe the latter to be the true view. I believe that under democracy representative institutions tend to such rapid decay that they cease to be capable of expressing the views of the nation as a whole and become the mere instruments of contending factions. I believe that the Party-system as it is worked, and as it is bound to be worked, under democracy, is essentially fatal to the higher forms of the Parliamentary organism.

Perhaps this is no very vital matter from the point of view of those who, like myself, hold that Parliamentary institutions are not the higher but the lower forms through which the thought and opinion and intelligence of the nation are expressed in policy

and action, and who could consequently regard the supersession of such institutions with equanimity as a step in the evolutionary process towards better things. It is difficult indeed to believe that Parliament, at all events in its present form and in annual session, is essential to the welfare of the nation, when one reflects upon the singular fact that its main work consists in laboriously pulling down to-day what it laboriously built up yesterday; that the politician of the present condemns and as far as possible abrogates the work of the politician of a quarter of a century ago.

The opinion [wrote Buckle] that the civilisation of Europe is chiefly owing to the ability which has been displayed by the different Governments, and to the sagacity with which the evils of society have been palliated by legislative remedies, must to anyone who has studied history in its original sources, appear so extravagant as to make it difficult to refute it with becoming gravity. Every great reform which has been effected has not consisted in doing something new, but in undoing something old, that is, something that ought never to have been done. When the reform was accomplished the only result was to place things on the same footing as if legislators had never interfered at all.

The student of history knows that Buckle's statement, exaggerated as it seems to be, is really a most sober and moderate expression of a very important truth. To him there is nothing new or strange in the developments of democracy which are going on before our eyes, startling as these may seem to others. He knows that things move in circles, and that what is called progress usually consists in starting at one point of the circle and then coming round to it again; that extremes beget extremes; and that ultra-democracy inevitably leads straight back to despotism. Then the

whole process begins over again. That extension of the electorate which under a pure democracy seems destined to go on and on until every man and woman is equal to every other man and woman as regards the power of forming and influencing the government of the nation, and which involves the dependence of the government upon the ignorance of the many instead of the wisdom of the few, tends directly and necessarily to the deterioration of the elected legislature and to the destruction of the unelected.

But we need not go to history for examples; we have them in what happened but yesterday in our own country. During the Session of Parliament which has just closed Mr. Wyndham, Chief Secretary for Ireland, uttered these remarkable words: "Knowing how mischievous the Land Act of 1881 was the Unionist party fifteen years ago adopted Purchase as its policy. It did it for two reasons, in order to create a peasant proprietary, but also, as I think, to find an exit out of this limbo of litigation into which the land of Ireland had been plunged by the Act of 1881." And during the same debate Mr. Arthur Balfour said of the same Act: "I have never been, and am not now, an advocate of that measure. I believe that in principle it was indefensible, and in practice impossible to carry out effectually. . . . The system is undoubtedly a system from which friction is inseparable, and, administer it as you will, it will never lead to a final or satisfactory result."

Here, then, we have two great Land Acts, that of 1870 and that of 1881, which were passed by the Radical party in opposition to the Conservative party; they were party acts, passed from party motives and for party ends, though of course the actual motive was obscured by clouds

of rhetoric. Fervent professions of zeal for the public good, and rosy predictions of the blessings which would follow these Acts, imposed upon Parliament and people as they had done hundreds of times before, and they pretended to believe that moral and economic laws could be set aside with impunity. Not many years have passed, but disillusionment is complete; nobody has now a good word to say for these Land Acts, not even those in whose interests they were really passed, for Mr. John Redmond, the Nationalist leader, condemns them even more emphatically than Mr. Balfour and Mr. Wyndham.

Other similar examples might be taken from our recent history, especially where Irish legislation is concerned, but these two must suffice. Let it be noted, however, that the process of deterioration has affected the political life of the entire kingdom. It began from the moment when the Reform Bill of 1832 was passed, which may be said to have placed the destinies of the nation in the hands of the middle classes, though it made no rapid progress until after the Reform Bill of 1867 was carried, which transferred political power from the upper and the middle to the lower classes. Then every degenerative process was accelerated and the nation was swept downward towards the abyss as by an irresistible flood. The era of Household Suffrage was, and is, the era of political deterioration and of moral blindness and insensibility. Ever since 1867 Parliament, which is the creature and the reproduction of the electorate, has been degenerating.

And this is no singular phenomenon; it is but the necessary effect of natural law. "The effective power of a political institution," says Sir Erskine May, "is determined, not by assertions of authority, nor even by

its legal recognition, but by the external forces by which it is supported, controlled, or overborne." What are these external forces in the case of Parliament? By what is it created, supported, controlled, and overborne? By the desires, prejudices, caprices, and jealousies of a multitude of people who have neither time nor inclination, nor for the most part competency, to form an intelligent judgment on the varied and complicated subjects designated under the term *politics*. The many are and must be in the nature of things politically ignorant, as they know nothing of history, economics, sociology, or commerce; they are limited in knowledge and vision, and incapable of reflection and reasoning; they are led by impulse and passion, and have little regard even for the moral law. What sort of Parliament are such people likely to create and support? Obviously a Parliament which will consent to be used as an instrument for carrying out their designs; which is capable of being used as a channel to convey to them what they wish. When they have created such a Parliament will they leave it untrammelled? Not for a moment; they will control and overbear it by all the arts of the wire-puller, all the fulminations of the agitator, all the pressure of the Caucus. Such an electorate is not satisfied with free representatives who will promote their interests subject to the restraints of morality, reason, and experience; they demand delegates without opinions of their own, who are prepared to express and carry out the will of their constituents, subject to no restraint whatever, whether from the moral law, from history, or from common-sense.

And the electorate gets its way. Our Parliament consists less and less of men who are at liberty to serve their constituents according to their

own judgment of what is right or expedient, and more and more of men who are willing to take their orders from the people by whose votes they are elected. One result of this is that every member of the House wishes to be in evidence,—to ask questions, to make speeches, to move adjournments, to introduce bills, to influence committees, and so on; the poor man has orders from his constituency to do all these things, and he has no option but to attempt to do them. This leads directly to the congestion of business which is blocking the Parliamentary machine, and which shows this curious result,—that the longer the session of Parliament, the smaller is the legislative product.

Take the Session which has just closed, which was at once one of the busiest ever known and one of the most barren. The divisions up to Whitsuntide amounted to 213, as against 142 up to the same period last year, when the House sat three weeks longer. In the division on the coal-tax 564 members took part, a total which has never been reached since 1888, when 580 members voted on Mr. Gladstone's Irish Land Purchase amendment. In two divisions more than 500 members took part; in four more than 450; in forty-one more than 400; in seventy-eight more than 300, and in one hundred and sixty-four more than 250. In these divisions fifty-three hours were spent; that is to say, members spent over a week of Parliamentary time in tramping through the division-lobbies during the first half of the Session alone. After Whitsuntide there were 269 divisions, whereas in the Session of 1900 there were only 288 altogether. The Home Rule Session, which lasted till Christmas, had 450 divisions; in last Session, which began late, took long holidays, and ended on August 17th, there were 482. In the whole of

these divisions one hundred and twenty hours were spent, or nearly three weeks of Parliamentary time. And yet at the end of it all virtually nothing had been done! Is it any wonder that sensible men are growing tired of the farce, and that they show their disgust by absenting themselves from the House in spite of threatening Whips and angry constituents? What self-respecting man will go down to the House day after day to discuss bills which are destined never to pass? Why should he strive night after night to catch the Speaker's eye if his speech is to have no other practical result than to gratify a few of his constituents? What can a private member hope to achieve as a legislator when it takes a quarter of a century to get a private bill through the House, even when there is a majority in its favour? No wonder that one disillusioned member should have exclaimed during the late Session: "We shall soon be driven to leave the House in despair to the babblers and the politicians." There spoke the practical man, the man of affairs, the man who is in earnest to get something done.

It is indeed a singular phenomenon which we are witnessing in this new Parliament, barely a year old, which consists chiefly of young and able men, but which nevertheless has over it an air of weariness and feebleness, of inertness and disappointment, which is as stale and jaded as our army in South Africa is said to be. But it is part of the price we have to pay for Household Suffrage.

That the demoralisation affects the Conservative no less than the Liberal party is proved by the great difficulty which the Government has experienced in keeping its men up to the mark in the House of Commons. With a majority of something like one hundred

and fifty, it has on more than one occasion narrowly escaped defeat, and on one has actually experienced it, on August 12th, on the "Saturday Stop" clause of the Factory Bill, when the Government were beaten by a majority of twenty-two. On Tuesday, June 25th, its majority fell to twenty-eight, while between ninety and one hundred Unionist members were absent unpaired. And all this while a war which has already cost thousands of lives and millions of pounds is wearily dragging on to an end whose date no man can foresee! *If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?*

Lord Salisbury says his men are apathetic because the "Constitution is no longer in jeopardy," by which he means, I suppose, that there is no Home Rule party in power to disintegrate the United Kingdom. But since he and his party can do nothing better than perpetuate the worst Acts the Home Rule party ever passed, and add to them other Acts still more unjust, it is not clear to impartial men how the Constitution can be any safer in Conservative than in Radical hands. The fact is that the same causes which have led to the deterioration of Parliament are also tending to obliterate all vital distinctions between the two political parties and to destroy the significance of party names. If the Radicals have not become Conservative, the Conservatives have turned Radical; and hence we have, as regards essential principles, two parties which are so much alike as to be virtually one. It would be far better for all concerned if they would drop the pretence that they are antagonists, and act together under one name, instead of keeping up the farce of separate names and organisations. We should then at least know where we are, and we might have a chance of getting that

National party which Lord Rosebery has foreshadowed, but which it is to be feared is still a long way from being realised in actual fact.

Lord Salisbury and Mr. Balfour have recently censured the Radical party in general and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman in particular because they throw no zeal into the work of opposition. But is this fair? Why, in the name of reason, should the Radicals oppose a Government which does their work for them better than they could do it themselves? An earnest Radical Opposition postulates a Government which is equally energetic in suppressing Radical ideas and preventing their embodiment in legislation. Have we such a Government at present? Everybody knows that we have not. If Lord Salisbury and Mr. Balfour wish to evoke the fighting powers of the Radicals, and at the same time put new spirit into their own men, let them return to the Conservative principles which they have deserted. They will have little cause then to complain either of apathy on their own side or of the lack of a militant Opposition on the other.

"My wish would be," said Lord Salisbury the other day, "that the Constitution should work on in its old way, and that both sides should exert themselves to the utmost in order to carry out the beliefs which they have been returned to sustain." Very good; but our Premier here assumes that he and his party are exerting themselves to the utmost to maintain the Conservative conception and ideal of government; while in fact they are doing nothing of the kind. Surrender to Radicalism, compromise with Radicalism, absorption of Radicalism,—these are the notes of their policy everywhere; and surely they are sufficient to account for the resentment which it has provoked in so many of their followers.

It will not do for Lord Salisbury to fasten the blame for the present state of things in Parliament upon Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman because he does not lead, that is to say, control and command the Radical party as Gladstone did. Nobody knows better than Lord Salisbury that the process of deterioration has gone much deeper even since Gladstone's time, and that it has not been confined to one side of politics only. Were Mr. Gladstone living to-day he would find it a far more difficult task to lead the Radical party than he did in his own time.

"The Unionist cause has been too successful, and in that very success lay the seeds of danger." This is another of Lord Salisbury's explanations, but it is hardly more convincing than the former. His Lordship was put into power to deliver the nation from Radical doctrines and policy; he has a majority numerous and powerful enough to enable him to carry any Conservative measures which are really necessary to save the country from the predatory and tyrannical designs of Radicalism; but he does none of the things that he was put into office to do; he fritters away time and opportunity, and then confesses that he and his followers have so little heart in their work that even the attendance of Conservative members in the House cannot be enforced. This seems a sufficiently severe self-condemnation, and no very high compliment to Mr. Balfour's leadership.

The net result then of all our boasted Reform Bills is that we have a Parliament which, on the whole, is less truly representative of the nation, and is certainly less effective as an instrument of legislation, than it was in the times before Reform. Of Parliament in the eighteenth century Sir Erskine May says: "Notwithstanding the flagrant defects in the repre-

sentation, Parliament generally kept itself in accord with the general sentiments of the country." And again, of the early part of the nineteenth century he has written:

Notwithstanding a defective representation, however, Parliament generally sustained its position as fairly embodying the political sentiments of its time. Under a narrow and corrupt electoral system, the ablest men in the country found an entrance into the House of Commons; and their rivalry and ambition ensured the acceptance of popular principles and the passage of many remedial measures.

It is questionable whether as much can be said of the House of Commons to-day.

"The control of the purse," Mr. Davies very truly says, "is after all the chief instrument of power." If there is one power which the House of Commons has more jealously guarded than any other it is this. All through its procedure one finds extraordinary powers placed in its hands to enable it to examine, question, and test every item of expenditure, powers which can often be put into operation by a single member, and which, if used for purposes of obstruction, may delay the business of Parliament for days and weeks. Now, by the curious irony of events, the House is losing this most highly prized prerogative.

Owing to the unscrupulous use of the financial powers of the House for purely obstructive ends it has now been decided that no more than twenty-four days of the Session shall be devoted to the Estimates. When that time has expired all the votes remaining to be passed must be passed without a single word of discussion, either for or against, though a division can be taken on each vote. Thus hour after hour is spent by members in tramping through the

division-lobbies, silently recording their opinions, not one of them allowed to utter a word by way of complaint, criticism, or inquiry.

This year twenty-three days were allotted to Supply, yet when the guillotine fell there were still ninety-eight votes to pass. A division on each of these would have meant a waste of no less than twenty-four hours. Mr. Balfour, therefore, induced the House to alter even the reformed system, and one division was made to cover a group of Estimates, thus of course materially reducing the number of divisions, but also still further weakening the control of the House over this principal instrument of its power. For there can be no doubt that under this new arrangement the power of the purse has been seriously weakened, even if it has not been reduced to a mere semblance of control. When millions of money can be voted in three or four hours, in the dark, so to say, abuse and extravagance, if nothing worse, are at least made possible and easy. Undoubtedly, too, many members of Parliament chafe under a sense of their impotence in respect of these matters, and curse the fate which has virtually shorn the House of Commons of one of its most cherished rights. Yet they have only themselves to blame. The change is in the nature of a Nemesis, a retribution which has been brought about by gross abuse of the forms of the House. And every Session proves more and more clearly that if some such precautions had not been taken the Estimates could never be got through at all. Democracy creates conditions under which it is difficult to secure even a modicum of necessary legislation. Let us hear Sir Erskine May once more.

Subjects the most trivial are forced upon the attention of the House by

means of questions and incidental debates; and, after weary sittings, such as no other deliberative assembly has ever been willing to endure, matters of the first importance fail to obtain a hearing. These difficulties were apparent in the first reformed Parliaments after 1832; and they have since been aggravated so seriously as to threaten the character and competency of the most powerful branch of the Legislature. . . . The effective power of the House has often been held in check, and sometimes nearly paralysed.

What will be the next stage in the descent? Will it be the elimination of the House of Lords from our politics as a vital force, either by its formal abolition, or, as is more likely, by its emasculation, so that while it lives in form it will be dead in fact? Some might be inclined to ask whether the latter process has not already taken place. By the law and the constitution of the country the House of Lords has a right to existence which is as indefeasible as that of the House of Commons or even the Throne itself; and not only has it a right to exist, but it is bound to justify its existence by exercising to the full its legitimate functions whenever legislation is proposed which is contrary to moral law and to natural right. For them to acquiesce in such legislation is the unpardonable sin. It is no justification at all for them to plead that "the people" are determined to have these unjust laws. Who are "the people"? Not alone those who shout at public meetings and vote at elections, but also those intelligent, industrious, and peaceable citizens to whom the whole machinery of politics is fast growing an abomination. The House of Lords is not amenable to "the people," who have not created it and who cannot destroy it; its responsibility is to that which is highest in the nation and to history; it stands for the moral law, for righteousness, for that truth which

is permanent in both morals and economics; for those elements which are abiding and ineradicable, as opposed to the transient vapourings of democracy; it is set for the defence of the very things which democracy would destroy, the things which are precious beyond all price and with which are bound up everything that is highest in the national life. If it will not defend these things, it is playing the nation false.

It is impossible to appraise too highly the priceless service rendered to the Empire by the Peers when they so promptly and decisively rejected the Home Rule Bill. They acted nobly in that grave crisis, and it must be counted to them for righteousness for all time. The greater the pity that they should have virtually stultified themselves twelve years later by accepting, at the hands of a Conservative Government, a measure which in all but the name was a Home Rule Bill so far as the loyalists of Ireland were concerned, though no doubt it left the legal and nominal union of Ireland and Great Britain unaffected. The Irish Local Government Act of 1898 is producing all the evil effects of Nationalist predominance in relation to the loyal classes in Ireland, though appearances were saved by giving it a less terrifying name than Home Rule and by taking precautions to prevent it being used as an instrument to injure England. In other words England, while guarding herself against the machinations of Home Rulers, calmly handed over to their tender mercies the loyal classes of Ireland. Those Irish loyalists looked to the House of Lords to save them, and they looked in vain.

Again, nothing could be more iniquitous when judged by the standard either of the moral law or of Conservative principles, than such measures

as the Death Duties Act, or the series of Employers' Liability Acts which culminated this year in the most arbitrary and unjust of them all, in the Act which extends this legislation, in peculiarly oppressive and irritating forms, to agriculture and even to horticulture. It is now the law of this land that the employer of a farm-labourer or a gardener is bound, should such gardener or labourer be injured or killed while at work, to compensate the injured man, or his family in the event of his death, though the employer may have had no more to do with the accident than the man in the moon, though the workman may have caused the accident himself, though it may even have been due to an Act of God. Could anything be more tyrannical or unjust than this? Perhaps it is not surprising that the House of Commons should pass such laws, but it is astounding that the House of Lords should assent to them. It still remains in full possession of every power that it has ever had, and all it needs is the courage to use those powers. If, as Sir Erskine May suggests, the Lords are strong when the Liberal party is weak, what enormous strength they ought to have just now. Yet were they ever weaker? And why? Because the Conservatives have become even as the Radicals as regards all the higher subjects of legislation; they are merely a division of the one democratic party. Hence whichever half of the party is in power, the House of Lords finds itself under pressure to register the decrees of our democratic dictators. It should be clearly understood, however, that it is under no obligation to allow itself to be used in this way; that it is armed with powers which, if used, not recklessly and defiantly but with discretion and moderation, will not

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only save its own life and restore its own *prestige* and authority, but will deliver the country from a serious and increasing danger. It is hardly too much to say that the salvation of the empire may depend upon a revival of spirit and courage in the House of Lords.

In the absence of such a revival things will go from bad to worse, and Sir Erskine May's prophecy will be fulfilled: "As the representation of the people is further extended, an accord between the two Houses will be more difficult, while the power of resistance¹ on the part of the Lords will be proportionately weakened."

Whether what is wrong in Parliament can be remedied while we retain our present ultra-democratic system is a large question. Personally I believe that a remedy is possible, though its

¹ Surely it would have been more correct to say here "the *inclination* to resist" instead of "the *power* of resistance." The Lords have power enough, all that they ever had.

application would involve some considerable modifications in our present form of government. The subject is, however, too large to be entered upon at the close of this paper. I will, therefore, briefly summarise what I have said by again pointing out that in our democracy two tendencies are at work side by side: one ever seeking to reduce our elected Parliament to the level of a body of delegates, whose only function is to embody in legislation the narrow, capricious, and selfish views of the mass of their constituents; the other chafing and surging against the unelected Parliament that forms, or should form, a breakwater against the waves of revolutionary violence, which, were this barrier removed, would submerge all moral ideals, engulf the larger freedom, and dissolve every tie by which men hold their property, or, in other words, their liberty and their life.

JOHN BULL *Junior*.

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